

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 846
By: Raney
Higher Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties point out that certain students in Texas who have attempted to use financial assistance for veterans and their families have faced additional hurdles in using that assistance to pay for college courses. C.S.H.B. 846 seeks to help these students by implementing assistance programs for veterans and their families.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 846 amends the Education Code to prohibit a public institution of higher education from imposing additional fees, obligations, or burdens concerning payment or registration on a student eligible for state or federal military related student financial assistance programs for military veterans or their family members that are not otherwise required by those programs to be imposed for the purpose of receiving that assistance. The bill requires an institution to provide for such a student to defer payment of tuition and fees if the receipt of military related financial assistance awarded to the student is delayed and requires the Texas Veterans Commission, in cooperation with institutions of higher education, to prescribe a standard deferment request form for such purpose. The bill expressly does not prohibit an institution of higher education from requiring an applicable student to submit a free application for federal student aid (FAFSA). The bill applies beginning with the 2017-2018 academic year.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2017.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 846 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following comparison is organized and formatted in a manner that indicates the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

INTRODUCED

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 56, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 56.0065 to read as follows:

Sec. 56.0065. STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR VETERANS AND FAMILIES; EQUAL PROTECTION. An institution of higher education may not impose additional obligations or burdens concerning payment or registration on a student eligible for state and federal student financial assistance programs available to military veterans or their family members that are not otherwise required by those programs to be imposed for the purpose of receiving that assistance.

No equivalent provision.

SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2017.

HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 56, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 56.0065 to read as follows:

Sec. 56.0065. STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR VETERANS AND FAMILIES; EQUAL PROTECTION. (a) An institution of higher education may not impose additional fees, obligations, or burdens concerning payment or registration on a student eligible for state or federal military related student financial assistance programs for military veterans or their family members that are not otherwise required by those programs to be imposed for the purpose of receiving that assistance.

(b) An institution of higher education must provide for a student described by Subsection (a) to defer payment of tuition and fees if the receipt of military related financial assistance awarded to the student is delayed. The Texas Veterans Commission, in cooperation with institutions of higher education, shall prescribe a standard deferment request form for the purposes of this subsection.

(c) This section does not prohibit an institution of higher education from requiring a student described by Subsection (a) to submit a free application for federal student aid (FAFSA).

SECTION 2. The changes in law made by this Act apply beginning with the 2017-2018 academic year.

SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2017.