

- SUBJECT:** Designating employee to handle military student financial aid programs
- COMMITTEE:** Defense and Veterans' Affairs — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 6 ayes — Corte, Edwards, Farias, Ortiz, Pickett, C. Turner
0 nays
3 absent — Vaught, Chavez, Maldonado
- WITNESSES:** For — Mark Harden; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Terry Cotton; James Cunningham, Texas Council of Chapters Military Officers Association of America; John Miterko, Texas Coalition of Veteran Organizations)

Against — None
- BACKGROUND:** The most notable educational assistance programs available for military veterans are the federal G.I. Bill, which pays for tuition and fees at public and private universities, and the Texas Hazelwood Exemption, which is a tuition exemption program set up for veterans and qualified dependents. Students who qualify under the Hazelwood Exemption are exempt from all tuition and fee charges. The new federal Post-9/11 G.I. Bill will go into effect later this year.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 3951 would require each higher education institution to ensure that one or more of its employees was trained in understanding state and federal student financial aid programs for military veterans and their families. The employee would have to be available to assist military veterans and eligible family members during regular business hours at the financial aid office or other office to which the employee was assigned.
- Public higher education institutions would have until January 1, 2010, to comply with the provisions of the bill.
- The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2009.