

SUBJECT: Making apprenticeships eligible for prepaid higher education tuition funds

COMMITTEE: Higher Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 9 ayes — Murphy, Pacheco, Cortez, Frullo, Muñoz, Ortega, Parker,
C. Turner, J. Turner

0 nays

2 absent — P. King, Raney

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, April 23 — 31-0, on Local and Uncontested Calendar

WITNESSES: None

BACKGROUND: It has been suggested that since postsecondary academics may not be the best educational choice for every student, registered apprenticeship programs should be eligible for funding through the state's prepaid higher education tuition programs.

DIGEST: CSSB 1094 would authorize contract benefits purchased under the prepaid higher education tuition program to be applied to the payment of tuition and required fees for an apprenticeship program registered and certified with the U.S. Department of Labor under the federal National Apprenticeship Act as if the program were a public, private, or independent institution of higher education.

On the purchaser's request, the board would have to apply any existing amount of prepaid tuition contract benefits to the payment of registered apprenticeship program tuition and required fees. The board would not be responsible for the payment of apprenticeship program tuition and required fees in excess of that amount.

The bill would make registered apprentice program tuition and fees eligible for payment by tuition units purchased under a contract through the undergraduate prepaid tuition unit program funded by the Texas

Tomorrow Fund II.

The bill also would specify the authority of the Prepaid Higher Education Tuition board and any entity established to implement the Texas Save and Match Program to release certain program information to the extent required by a medical or dental unit or registered apprenticeship program in which a program beneficiary was enrolled.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2021, and would apply to contract benefits purchased before, on, or after that date.