CHAPTER 528

S.B. No. 497

AN ACT

relating to the number of semester credit hours required to earn an associate degree at public institutions of higher education.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Texas:

SECTION 1. Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 61.05151 to read as follows:

Sec. 61.05151. SEMESTER CREDIT HOURS REQUIRED FOR ASSOCIATE DEGREE. (a) To earn an associate degree, a student may not be required by an institution of higher education to complete more than the minimum number of semester credit hours required for the degree by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools or its successor unless the institution determines that there is a compelling academic reason for requiring completion of additional semester credit hours for the degree.

(b) The board may review one or more of an institution's associate degree programs to ensure compliance with this section.

(c) Subsection (a) does not apply to an associate degree awarded by an institution to a student enrolled in the institution before the 2015 fall semester. This subsection does not prohibit the institution from reducing the number of semester credit hours the student must complete to receive the degree.

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, 2013.

Passed the Senate on March 21, 2013: Yeas 31, Nays 0; passed the House on May 22, 2013: Yeas 145, Nays 3, two present not voting.

Approved June 14, 2013.
Effective June 14, 2013.

CHAPTER 529

S.B. No. 498

AN ACT

relating to applying credit earned by a student at a general academic teaching institution to an associate's degree at a lower-division institution of higher education previously attended by the student.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Texas:

SECTION 1. Subsection (b), Section 61.833, Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b) This section applies to a student enrolled in a general academic teaching institution who:

(1) transferred to the institution from or previously attended a lower-division institution of higher education;

(2) earned at least 30 credit hours for course work successfully completed at the lower-division institution of higher education; and

(3) has earned a cumulative total of at least 66 [99] credit hours for course work successfully completed.

SECTION 2. The change in law made by this Act to Subsection (b), Section 61.833, Education Code, applies beginning with the 2013 fall semester. A semester or other academic term before the 2013 fall semester is covered by the applicable law as it existed
before the effective date of this Act, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 3. 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, 2013.

Passed the Senate on March 21, 2013: Yeas 31, Nays 0; passed the House on May 22, 2013: Yeas 148, Nays 0, two present not voting.

Approved June 14, 2013.
Effective June 14, 2013.

CHAPTER 530
S.B. No. 499
AN ACT
relating to the determination of actual damages to enable compensation from the manufactured homeowners' recovery trust fund.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Texas:

SECTION 1. Subsection (e), Section 1201.405, Occupations Code, is amended to read as follows:

(e) In determining the amount of actual damages under this section, the director shall make an independent inquiry as to the damages actually incurred, unless the damages have been previously established through a [by-a] contested [jury] trial.

SECTION 2. The change in law made by this Act applies only to a complaint under Subsection (a), Section 1201.406, Occupations Code, that is pending on the effective date of this Act or is filed on or after the effective date of this Act. A complaint that is filed before the effective date of this Act and is not pending on the effective date of this Act is covered by the law in effect on the date the complaint was filed, and that law is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2013.

Passed the Senate on March 13, 2013: Yeas 31, Nays 0; the Senate concurred in House amendment on May 22, 2013: Yeas 31, Nays 0; passed the House, with amendment, on May 17, 2013: Yeas 134, Nays 0, two present not voting.

Approved June 14, 2013.
Effective September 1, 2013.

CHAPTER 531
S.B. No. 503
AN ACT
relating to the establishment of the Expanded Learning Opportunities Council to study and make recommendations concerning expanded learning opportunities for public school students.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Texas:

SECTION 1. Chapter 33, Education Code, is amended by adding Subchapter G to read as follows:

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