

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 767
By: Junell (Lindsay)
Finance
5-14-97
Engrossed

DIGEST

Section 54.211, Education Code, permits youths in the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (department) foster care to obtain free tuition at state-operated colleges, universities, and vocational schools when they become 18 years of age or older.

Seventy-three youths utilized the tuition waiver in academic year 1993-94, at a cost of \$50,878 to taxpayers. This number grew to 168 in academic year 1994-95, at a cost of \$102,308 to taxpayers. The figure for academic year 1995-96 is 217 youths. Section 54.211, Education Code, has provided an incentive for many children in foster care to complete high school and enter college.

Currently, state law requires that former foster care youths must be 18 or older to utilize the college tuition waiver. The department estimates that this issue affects about 25 youths per year who graduate high school before their 18th birthday and are ready to attend college. The department estimates that about 20 children stay in the department conservatorship while waiting to reach age 18 to take advantage of the college tuition waiver. Meanwhile, the state continues to pay for the foster care of these children.

H.B. 767 would extend the tuition waiver to youths of any age who graduate from high school or receive a high school equivalency degree while under the department conservatorship.

PURPOSE

As proposed, H.B. 767 extends the tuition waiver to youths of any age who graduate from high school or receive a high school equivalency degree while under the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services conservatorship.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 54.211, Education Code, to provide that a student is exempt from the payment of tuition and fees authorized in this chapter if the student was in foster care or other residential care under the conservatorship of the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services when the student graduated from high school or received the equivalent of a high school diploma; and enrolls in an institution of higher education as an undergraduate student not later than the third anniversary of the date the student was discharged from the foster or other residential care, the date the student graduated from high school, or the date the student received the equivalent of a high school diploma, whichever is earliest.

SECTION 2. Provides that this Act applies beginning with the 1997 fall semester.

SECTION 3. Emergency clause.
Effective date: upon passage.