

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
79R13074 JRJ-D

C.S.S.B. 774
By: Van de Putte
Veteran Affairs & Military Installations
5/13/2005
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S/SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Hazlewood Act provides 150 credit hours of free tuition and free or reduced fees at public colleges and universities for eligible veterans of the armed forces. However, even though Texas is home to about 1.7 million veterans, only 8,000 to 9,000 veterans are currently utilizing the Hazlewood exemption.

Currently, the only children of veterans who can use the Hazlewood exemption are those whose parent was killed in action or as a result of his or her military service, and those whose parent was missing in action or held as a prisoner of war. Because veterans, through their service to the country, are entitled to the benefit themselves, a veteran should be able to allow a family member to use the entitlement in the event that the veteran is unable to use the hours to his or her own benefit.

C.S.S.B. 774 (The Hazlewood Legacy Act) allows veterans who have not used all their Hazlewood exemption to designate one child of the veteran to use the remaining tuition exemption in his or her place. In order to keep the program as simple as possible, this bill only allows one child, and no grandchildren, to use the benefit.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 (Section 54.203, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BYSECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 54.203, Education Code, by amending Subsections (a), (e), and (g) and adding Subsections (h) and (i), as follows:

- (a) Makes modifications to the list of individuals who governing boards of institutions of higher education are required to exempt from certain higher education tuition and fees. Makes a nonsubstantive change.
- (e) Makes conforming and nonsubstantive changes.
- (g) Makes a conforming change.
- (h) Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) by rule to prescribe procedures to allow a person who becomes eligible for an exemption provided by Subsection (a) before September, 2015, to waive the person's right to any unused portion of the maximum number of cumulative credit hours for which the person could receive the exemption and assign the exemption for the unused portion of those credit hours to one of the person's children. Sets forth certain requirements for the procedures.
- (i) Requires a person to meet certain requirements to be eligible to receive an exemption under Subsection (h).

SECTION 2. (a) Provides that the change in law made by this Act to Section 54.203(a)(4) applies only to a person who is honorably discharged from the armed forces of the United States on or after the effective date of this Act.

(b) Makes application of this Act prospective to the 2005 fall semester.

(c) Requires THECB to prescribe the procedures required by Section 54.203(h) and (i), Education Code, as required by this Act, as soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act. Authorizes THECB to adopt such rules in the manner provided by law for emergency rules.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2005.