

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 43
By: Zaffirini et al.
Higher Education
9/29/2009
Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Although Texas statute authorizes tuition exemptions for former foster youth, these students face additional challenges as they transition into higher education. Currently, students must enroll at an institution of higher education by the age of 21 to lock-in their tuition benefits. This expectation is contrary to evidence that former foster youth may need time to mature, additional support, and structure, before realizing the benefits of higher education. S.B. 43 encourages foster youth to participate in dual credit programs. These programs offer students academic rigor and an early introduction to higher education.

S.B. 43 amends current law relating to tuition and fee exemptions at public institutions of higher education for students who have been under the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

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

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends the heading of Section 54.211, Education Code, to read as follows:

Sec. 54.211. EXEMPTIONS FOR STUDENTS UNDER CONSERVATORSHIP OF DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 54.211(a), Education Code, as follows:

(a) Provides that a student is exempt from the payment of tuition and fees authorized in this chapter, including tuition and fees charged by an institution of higher education for a dual credit course or other course for which a high school student may earn joint high school and college credit, if the student was under the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services on the day preceding the student's 18th birthday; on or after the day of the student's 14th birthday, if the student was also eligible for adoption on or after that day; on the day the student graduated from high school or received the equivalent of a high school diploma; or during an academic term in which the student was enrolled in a dual credit course or other course for which a high school student may earn joint high school and college credit; and enrolls in an institution of higher education as an undergraduate student or in a dual credit course or other course for which a high school student is authorized to earn joint high school and college credit not later than the student's 25th, rather than 21st, birthday. Deletes existing text requiring that the student enroll in an institution of higher education as an undergraduate student not later than the third anniversary of a certain date. Makes conforming and nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 3. Provides that Section 54.211, Education Code, as amended by this Act, applies beginning with the tuition and other fees charged for the 2010 spring semester. Provides that tuition and fees charged for an academic period before that semester are covered by the law in effect immediately before the effective date of this Act, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 4. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.