

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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H.B. 3470
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Veteran Affairs & Military Installations
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program was created to encourage students to participate in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) at institutions of higher education in Texas by providing scholarships to qualified students. The program authorizes the governor, lieutenant governor, and each member of the Senate and House of Representatives to annually appoint applicants to receive up to \$15,000. In addition to meeting and sustaining academic requirements, a student must enter into an agreement that includes a four-year commitment as member of the Texas Army National Guard, Texas Air Force National Guard, or a commissioned officer in any branch of the armed services.

H.B. 3470 improves access to the scholarship program. It allows transfer students from community colleges or other colleges to qualify for the scholarship, changes the first year graduation requirement to a six-year graduation requirement, extends eligibility to students who enter in the United States Coast Guard and the United States Merchant Marine, and allows students who are currently under contract with one of the armed services to not be disqualified from consideration for this scholarship.

H.B. 3470 amends current law relating to the Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority previously granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is rescinded in SECTION 3 (Section 61.9774, Education Code) of this bill.

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 4 of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 61.9772(a), Education Code, as follows:

(a) Requires a student, to receive an initial scholarship under this subchapter, to meet certain conditions, including to be enrolled, rather than be enrolled as a freshman, in a public or private institution of higher education in this state.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 61.9773(a), Education Code, as follows;

(a) Requires the agreement to require the student to complete four years of ROTC training, graduate not later than six, rather than five, years after the date the student first enrolls in a public or private institution of higher education in this state; after graduating enter into a four-year commitment to be a member of the Texas Army National Guard, Texas Air National Guard, Texas State Guard, United States Coast Guard, or United States Merchant Marine, rather than a four-year commitment to be a member of the Texas Army or Air Force National Guard; or enter into a contract to serve as a commissioned officer in any branch of the armed services of the United States; meet all the physical examination requirements and all other prescreening requirements of the Texas Army National Guard, Air National Guard, Texas State Guard, United States Coast

Guard, or United States Merchant Marine or the branch of the armed services with which the student enters into a contract.

SECTION 3. Amends Sections 61.9774 and 61.9775, Education Code, as follows:

Sec. 61.9774. RULES. Deletes existing Subsection (a) designation. Makes no further changes.

Deletes existing Subsection (b) requiring the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) by rule to provide that any amount paid to a student by a branch of the armed services of the United States during an academic year for which the student receives a scholarship under this subchapter because the student is under a contract with that branch be deducted from the amount of the scholarship awarded to the student for that academic year.

Sec. 61.9775. New heading: LIMITATIONS ON SCHOLARSHIP. (a) Creates this subsection from existing text and makes no further changes.

(b) Requires that a scholarship awarded to a student under this subchapter be reduced for an academic year by the amount by which the full amount of the scholarship plus the total amount to be paid to the student for being under contract with one of the branches of the armed services of the United States exceeds the student's total cost of attendance for that academic year at the public or private institution of higher education in which the student is enrolled.

SECTION 4. Requires THECB to adopt rules for the administration of Subchapter FF (Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program), Chapter 61 (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board), Education Code, as amended by this Act, as soon as practicable after this Act takes effect. Authorizes THECB, for that purpose, to adopt rules in the manner provided by law for emergency rules.

SECTION 5. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2011.