

SUBJECT: College admissions for graduates of U.S. Defense Department high schools

COMMITTEE: Higher Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 8 ayes — Rangel, Cuellar, F. Brown, Farabee, Goolsby, J. Jones, Morrison, E. Reyna

0 nays

1 absent — Wohlgemuth

WITNESSES: For — None

Against — None

On — Bruce Walker

BACKGROUND: Under HB 588 by Rangel, enacted in 1997, Texas public and private high school graduates in the top 10 percent of their class who apply to general academic teaching institutions within two years of graduation are admitted automatically.

DIGEST: CSHB 1804 would add to students to be admitted automatically by general academic teaching institutions those who graduated in the top 10 percent of their class from a high school operated by the U. S. Department of Defense. The students would have to be a Texas resident or entitled to pay resident tuition as a spouse or dependent child of a member of the Armed Forces who qualifies as a resident, as defined in the Education Code.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house and apply to admissions for the fall 2000 semester.

SUPPORTERS SAY: In 1997, the 75th Legislature approved automatic admission to public colleges and universities for Texas high school graduates at public and private schools who worked hard enough to graduate in the top 10 percent of their class . However, the law does not extend the same right to Texas residents who attend U.S. Department of Defense schools on military bases.

CSHB 1804 would end this discrimination against Texas military families, extending their children the same rights to admission to Texas public colleges and universities as all Texas families enjoy.

CSHB 1804 would affect only a small number of students. About 2,700 students graduate from Department of Defense schools each year. CSHB 1804 only would apply to the top 10 percent of graduates and would require students to qualify as Texas residents. On average, only about two dozen of these students would qualify for automatic admissions under CSHB 1804. This would have a negligible impact on Texas colleges and universities.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

CSHB 1804 would not go far enough because it would not apply to students who are Texas residents attending American schools in foreign countries. These students are dependents of Texans working in foreign countries in private industry or for a variety of U.S. government agencies. These schools graduate even fewer students than Department of Defense schools. If the Legislature added qualified graduates of American schools for automatic admissions, it would have virtually no impact on Texas college and university enrollment but would extend this privilege to all Texas students everywhere.

NOTES:

The committee substitute used more specific language in the caption than the original and also specified that the student would have to have graduated.