

SUBJECT: Housing between academic terms for former foster care children

COMMITTEE: Human Services — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 7 ayes — Raymond, Naishtat, Gonzalez, Hopson, Hughes, Laubenberg, V. Taylor

0 nays

2 absent — Morrison, Hunter

WITNESSES: For — Duncan Cormie, Lifeworks Austin; Jodyann Dawson, Texans Care for Children; Trista Miller, Foster Care Alumni of America - Texas Chapter; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Emilia Garcia, Texas State Employees Union, CWA Local 6186; Andrea Sparks, Texas CASA; Tiger Whitehead)

Against — None

On — Liz Kromrei, Department of Family and Protective Services

DIGEST: CSHB 452 would require a higher education institution to help an eligible student locate temporary housing between academic terms upon the student's request. A student would be eligible if he or she was under the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services immediately before turning 18 or becoming a legal adult, lacked housing between academic terms, and was enrolled full-time before or registered full-time after the period when housing assistance was needed. Additionally, CSHB 452 would allow an institution to provide temporary housing or a stipend for temporary housing to eligible students.

An institution would be allowed to use gifts, grants, donations, or legislative appropriations to assist in the housing needs of former foster care children. It would be required to use grants and donations before using appropriated funds.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2011.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

During winter, spring, or Thanksgiving breaks, most college students live at home while their dorm rooms are closed. Former foster care children do not have that luxury. Lacking a permanent home while their dorms are closed during break, many former foster care children are left homeless. Foreseeing this inevitability, many even choose not to go to college. CSHB 452 would require colleges to help certain students find temporary housing between academic terms. In most cases, this could be as simple as keeping one or two dorm rooms open or coordinating off campus housing with other students not living at home during these breaks.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

Winter, spring, and Thanksgiving breaks typically are when colleges can reduce residency costs. CSHB 452 could force some colleges to keep their campus dorms open during breaks for a very small number of students.

NOTES:

The companion bill, SB 1705 by Lucio, was referred to the Senate Higher Education Committee on March 23.