

SUBJECT: Tuition and fee exemptions for Texas Guard combat theater veterans

COMMITTEE: Higher Education — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 6 ayes — Branch, Castro, D. Howard, Johnson, Lewis, Patrick

0 nays

3 absent — Alonzo, Bonnen, Brown

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, April 28 — 31-0

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Michael Gutierrez)

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Wayne Peck, Adjutant General's Department)

BACKGROUND: Under Education Code, sec. 54.203, public institutions of higher education exempt certain military veterans who were honorably discharged after serving on active military duty for more than 180 days from certain tuition and fee payments.

DIGEST: SB 1734 would exempt a person who was a member of the Texas National Guard or the Texas Air National Guard who was assigned to a theater of combat operation with the armed forces, regardless of the length of the member's active military duty, from paying tuition and fees at Texas public institutions of higher education.

The bill would apply beginning with the 2011 fall semester.

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.

NOTES: According to the fiscal note, tuition losses under SB 1734 would not be considered significant, and the bill would have no significant fiscal implications for state or local governments.