

SUBJECT: Requiring school districts to issue certain posthumous diplomas

COMMITTEE: Public Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 12 ayes — Huberty, Bernal, Allen, Allison, Ashby, K. Bell, M. González, K. King, Meyer, Sanford, Talarico, VanDeaver

0 nays

1 absent — Dutton

WITNESSES: For — Lori Cerami; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Vincent Giardino, Tarrant County Criminal District Attorney's Office; Ted Raab, Texas American Federation of Teachers; Mark Terry, Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association; Buck Gilcrease, Texas School Alliance; Lisa Dawn-Fisher, Texas State Teachers Association; Lisa Flores; Kristi Hassett)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Monica Martinez, Texas Education Agency)

BACKGROUND: Education Code sec. 28.0254(a) requires school districts to issue posthumous high school diplomas to each student who died while enrolled in 12th grade in the district if a student's parent made a request. The diploma must be issued at the end of the school year provided that the student was academically on track at the time of death to receive a diploma.

DIGEST: CSHB 638 would remove the requirements that students be enrolled in 12th grade and on track to graduate at the time of their death in order for school districts to issue posthumous high school diplomas to parents upon request. The bill would add a requirement for the district to issue the posthumous diploma at the end of the school year in which the student was expected to graduate under the regular schedule of school attendance.

The diploma could not be issued before the graduation date of the class in which the student was enrolled at the time of death.

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, 2019. It would apply beginning with students who would have graduated at the end of the 2019-2020 school year.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

CSHB 638 would allow parents to request posthumous high school diplomas for students of any age, rather than limiting the request to parents of high school seniors. Regardless of when a child's death occurs, all parents should have the opportunity to posthumously honor their child at the child's expected high school graduation.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

No concerns identified.