

SUBJECT: Exempting disabled peace officers and fire fighters from university tuition

COMMITTEE: Higher Education — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 9 ayes — C. Turner, Button, Frullo, Howard, Pacheco, Schaefer, Smithee,
Walle, Wilson

0 nays

2 absent — Stucky, E. Johnson

WITNESSES: For — Chris Jones, Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas;
(*Registered, but did not testify*: Ray Hunt, Houston Police Officers' Union;
Monty Wynn, Texas Municipal League; Glenn Deshields, Texas State
Association of Fire Fighters)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Charles Puls, Texas Higher
Education Coordinating Board)

BACKGROUND: Education Code sec. 54.352 authorizes the governing board of a public
institution of higher education to exempt a peace officer of the state or one
of its subdivisions from tuition and fees if the student was injured in the
performance of duty, was permanently disabled, and was unable to
continue employment as a peace officer.

DIGEST: HB 766 would require the governing board of a public institution of
higher education to exempt a peace officer or fire fighter of the state or
one of its subdivisions from tuition and fees at higher education
institutions if the person was injured in the performance of duty, was
permanently disabled, and was unable to continue employment as a peace
officer or fire fighter because of the disability.

The chief administrative officer of the law enforcement agency, fire
department, or other entity that employed the person at the time of the

injury would determine whether the person was permanently disabled.

The exemption would be available only to in-state residents.

The bill would apply beginning with the fall 2019 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, 2019.