

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 716
By: Barrientos
Finance
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As Filed

DIGEST

Currently, Texas does not provide a scholarship exclusively for the children of experienced public school teachers. By some accounts, keeping good classroom teachers is a challenge for public schools and school districts because of the relatively low pay the state offers in comparison with other states. According to the comptroller, even though the 75th Legislature increased the state minimum salary schedule, Texas teacher salaries still fall below national averages. This bill would waive tuition at public institutions of higher education for children of teachers who have 10 or more years of teaching experience in Texas public schools and tuition and fees for children of teachers with 15 or more years of experience, in an effort to provide an incentive for teachers to remain in the profession and improve access to higher education for their children.

PURPOSE

As proposed, S.B. 716 provides for an exemption of tuition at an institution of higher education for the children of teachers who have 10 years or more experience as a teacher in Texas public schools.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board under SECTION 1 (Section 54.217(i), Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 54D, Education Code, by adding Section 54.217, as follows:

Sec. 54.217. CHILDREN OF CLASSROOM TEACHERS. Requires the governing board of each institution of higher education to exempt a person who is a resident of this state and a child of an eligible classroom teacher from the payment of all tuition or all tuition and required fees when the child is enrolled as an undergraduate student at the institution. Sets forth requirements regarding eligibility for exemption from payment. Provides that a person is not eligible for an exemption under this section under certain conditions. Provides that for the purposes of Subsection (d), a summer term or other academic session that is less than nine weeks in duration is considered one-half of a regular semester or equivalent academic session. Sets forth provisions regarding a refund to certain persons attending an institution of higher education. Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to adopt certain rules. Provides that an appropriation made to an institution of higher education in any biennium should be adjusted to take into consideration any tuition or fees exempted or any refund of tuition or fees made in the preceding biennium under this section. Defines "child" and "classroom teacher."

SECTION 2. (a) Provides that, except as provided by Subsection (b), this Act takes effect beginning with the fall semester 1998.

(b) Requires Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to adopt rules or forms relating to the exemption of the children of classroom teachers under Section 54.217, Education Code, as added by this Act, not later than January 1, 1998.

SECTION 3. Emergency clause.

Effective date: upon passage.