

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
76R13412 KKA-F

H.B. 3470
By: Olivo (Zaffirini)
Human Services
5/12/1999
Engrossed

DIGEST

The State of Maine created the Parents as Scholars Program (PSP) to assist low-income parents who qualify for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families in obtaining a post-secondary degree. No incentive programs such as PSP currently exists in Texas. H.B. 3470 would require the Texas Department of Human Services to establish a student financial aid pilot program entitled Parents as Scholars pilot program, under which a person eligible for financial assistance receives, in lieu of financial assistance, a package of benefits designed to assist the person in obtaining a post-secondary degree from an institution of higher education.

PURPOSE

As proposed, H.B. 3470 establishes the Parents as Scholars pilot program.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is granted to the Texas Department of Human Services in SECTION 1 (Sections 31.045(a), (b), and (d), Human Resources Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 31B, Human Resources Code, by adding Section 31.045, as follows:

Sec. 31.045. PARENTS AS SCHOLARS PILOT PROGRAM. (a) Requires the Texas Department of Human Services (DHS), by rule, to establish a student financial aid pilot program to be entitled the Parents as Scholars pilot program, subject to available funding. Requires a person eligible for financial assistance who participates in the program to receive, in lieu of financial assistance, a package of benefits designed to assist the person in obtaining a post-secondary degree from an institution of higher education, as defined by Section 61.003, Education Code. Authorizes the benefits provided to include assistance with payment of tuition and fees, payment of the cost of textbooks and other educational supplies, and payment of other costs associated with enrollment in the institution.

(b) Authorizes DHS, by rule, to establish eligibility criteria for the program. Sets forth the criteria requirements.

(c) Provides that a program participant is eligible for medical assistance under Chapter 32 and support services under Section 31.010 in the same manner as a person receiving financial assistance.

(d) Requires DHS, by rule, to establish time limits and other conditions applicable to a program participant, provided that DHS may not provide assistance to a program participant for more than 48 months, and DHS must require a program participant to demonstrate satisfactory educational progress to remain eligible for assistance.

(e) Requires DHS to fund the program from state funds specifically appropriated for that purpose or from other state funds otherwise available to DHS for the program. Authorizes DHS to accept gifts and grants from public or private sources to be used to fund the program. Requires DHS to establish and administer the program in such a manner that money spent under the program is included in determining the state's compliance with federal maintenance of effort requirements under Title IVA, Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. Section 601 et seq.).

(f) Requires DHS to submit to the legislature, a report relating to the program established under the section, no later than January 15, 2003. Requires the report to include an evaluation of the program's effectiveness in improving employability of persons eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits, and recommendations from DHS concerning termination, continuation, or expansion of the program.

(g) Provides that this section expires September 1, 2003.

SECTION 2. Requires the state agency to request the waiver or authorization and to delay implementing that provision until the waiver or authorization is granted, if before implementing any provision of this Act a state agency determines that a waiver or authorization from a federal agency is necessary for implementation.

SECTION 3. Emergency clause.

Effective date: upon passage.