

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 793
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Higher Education
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AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Allied health includes over 200 distinct disciplines, such as clinical laboratory scientists, physical therapists, respiratory therapists, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, and physician assistants, among others. Allied health professionals comprise approximately 60 to 65 percent of the health care workforce. It is estimated that for every physician, eight to 10 allied health professionals are required. The United States Department of Labor predicts a shortage of 1.6 to 2.5 million allied health workers in the United States by 2020.

S.B. 793 creates tuition incentives to assist in the recruitment and retention of allied health care faculty at institutions of higher education. Specifically, S.B. 793 provides undergraduate tuition exemptions for the children of full-time allied health faculty, or a pro-rata exemption for children of part-time allied health faculty, who attend the same school where their parents work, provides a \$500 tuition exemption for allied health preceptors and their children who are undergraduate students at the same institution, authorizes the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to develop allied health faculty enhancement grants to aid schools in recruiting faculty, and authorizes THECB to appoint an advisory committee to advise THECB on strategies for educating, recruiting, and retaining allied health faculty.

As proposed, S.B. 793 amends current law relating to incentives to recruit and retain allied health education program faculty.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 (Sections 54.225 and 54.226, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter D, Chapter 54, Education Code, by adding Sections 54.225 and 54.226, as follows:

Sec. 54.225. CHILDREN OF ALLIED HEALTH PROGRAM FACULTY. (a) Defines "allied health profession," "child," "graduate allied health program," and "undergraduate allied health program" in this section.

(b) Requires the governing board of an institution of higher education, contingent on appropriations of money for the exemptions, to exempt from the payment of tuition a resident of this state enrolled as an undergraduate student at the institution who is a child of a person who, at the beginning of the semester or other academic term for which the exemption is sought:

(1) holds a master's or doctoral degree in an allied health profession, if employed or under contract to serve in a position other than as a teaching assistant under Subdivision (2), or holds a baccalaureate degree in an allied health profession, if employed or under contract to serve as a teaching assistant under Subdivision (2); and

(2) either:

(A) is employed by the institution as a full-time member of the faculty or staff of an undergraduate or graduate allied health program with duties that include teaching, serving as a teaching assistant, performing research, serving as an administrator, or performing other professional services; or

(B) has contracted with the institution to serve as a full-time member of the faculty or staff of an undergraduate or graduate allied health program to perform duties described by Paragraph (A) during all or part of the semester or other academic term for which an exemption is sought or, if the child is enrolled for a summer session, during all or part of that session or for the next academic year.

(c) Provides that a child who would qualify for an exemption under this section but for the fact that the child's parent is not employed full-time is eligible for an exemption on a pro rata basis equal to the percentage of full-time employment the parent is employed, except that a parent employed for less than 25 percent of full-time employment is considered to be employed for 25 percent of full-time employment.

(d) Provides that a person is not eligible for an exemption under this section if the person:

(1) has previously received an exemption under this section for 10 semesters or summer sessions at any institution or institutions of higher education; or

(2) has received a baccalaureate degree.

(e) Provides that for purposes of Subsection (d), a summer session that is less than nine weeks in duration is considered one-half of a summer session.

(f) Provides that the tuition exemption provided by this section applies only to enrollment of a child at the institution at which the child's parent is employed or is under contract.

(g) Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to adopt:

(1) rules governing the granting or denial of an exemption under this section, including rules relating to the determination of eligibility for an exemption; and

(2) a uniform application form for an exemption under this section.

Sec. 54.226. PRECEPTORS FOR ALLIED HEALTH PROGRAMS. (a) Defines "allied health profession," "child," and "undergraduate allied health program" in this section.

(b) Requires the governing board of an institution of higher education to exempt a person from the payment of \$500 of the total amount of tuition otherwise charged to a resident of this state if the person is enrolled as a student at the institution and:

(1) holds a license, certificate, or registration in an allied health profession; and

(2) is serving under a written preceptor agreement with an undergraduate allied health program as a clinical preceptor for students enrolled in the

program for the semester or other academic term for which the exemption is sought.

(c) Requires the governing board of an institution of higher education to exempt a person from the payment of \$500 of the total amount of tuition otherwise charged to a resident of this state if the person is enrolled as an undergraduate student at the institution and is a child of a person who meets the requirements of Subsections (b)(1) and (2).

(d) Requires the governing board of the institution of higher education in which the person is enrolled, notwithstanding Subsections (b) and (c), if a person eligible for an exemption under this section owes less than \$500 in tuition, to exempt the person from the payment of only the amount of tuition the person owes.

(e) Provides that a person is not eligible for an exemption under Subsection (c) if the person:

(1) has previously received an exemption under this section for 10 semesters or summer sessions at any institution or institutions of higher education; or

(2) has received a baccalaureate degree.

(f) Provides that for purposes of Subsection (e), a summer session that is less than nine weeks in duration is considered one-half of a summer session.

(g) Requires THECB to adopt:

(1) rules governing the granting or denial of an exemption under this section, including rules relating to the determination of eligibility for an exemption; and

(2) a uniform application form for an exemption under this section.

SECTION 2. Amends Chapter 61, Education Code, by adding Subchapter GG, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER GG. ALLIED HEALTH FACULTY ENHANCEMENT GRANTS

Sec. 61.9781. DEFINITIONS. Defines "allied health profession" and "allied health program" in this subchapter.

Sec. 61.9782. ALLIED HEALTH FACULTY ENHANCEMENT GRANTS. Authorizes THECB, contingent on appropriations of money for the grants, to award allied health faculty enhancement grants to allied health programs to assist the programs in the education, recruitment, or retention of faculty members to enable the programs to train students to meet the state's need for health care providers in the allied health professions generally or in specific allied health professions as THECB determines appropriate.

Sec. 61.9783. USE OF GRANT. Authorizes a grant awarded under this subchapter to be used only for a purpose specified by Section 61.9782, including providing salary supplements and enhancements and reducing the number of hours a faculty member is required to teach.

Sec. 61.9784. MATCHING FUNDS FOR GRANT. Authorizes THECB, in awarding a grant under this subchapter, to require the receiving institution to provide matching funds or to give preference in awarding a grant to an institution that provides matching funds.

Sec. 61.9785. ADVISORY COMMITTEE. Authorizes THECB to appoint an advisory committee to advise THECB on successful strategies, in addition to the grants awarded

under this subchapter, for educating, recruiting, or retaining qualified allied health program faculty members who hold master's or doctoral degrees.

SECTION 3. (a) Provides that except as provided by Subsection (b) of this section, of Sections 54.225 and 54.226, Education Code, as added by this Act, apply beginning with the 2012 fall semester.

(b) Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, not later than January 1, 2012, to adopt rules and forms relating to tuition exemptions under Sections 54.225 and 54.226, Education Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 4. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2011.