

AN ACT

relating to vouchers for tuition and required fees at certain institutions of higher education and excused absences from public school for students who sound "Taps" at a veteran's funeral.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 434, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 434.0072 to read as follows:

Sec. 434.0072. "TAPS" TUITION VOUCHER PROGRAM. (a) In this section, "institution of higher education" and "private or independent institution of higher education" have the meanings assigned by Section 61.003, Education Code.

(b) The commission shall establish a program to issue vouchers to be exchanged for an exemption from the payment of tuition and required fees at an institution of higher education as provided by Section 54.215, Education Code, to students in grades 6 through 12 or at postsecondary educational institutions who sound "Taps" on a bugle, trumpet, or cornet during military honors funerals held in this state for deceased veterans. A voucher must be issued in the amount of \$25 for each time a student sounds "Taps" as described by this subsection.

(c) The commission by rule shall design a form for the vouchers and distribute the form, with an explanation of the form's use, to each funeral director in this state for issuance to a person who is eligible to receive a voucher under this section. The

1 commission may not charge a fee for distribution of the form.

2 (d) The commission shall encourage a private or independent
3 institution of higher education to grant a tuition and fee
4 exemption in exchange for a voucher.

5 (e) A voucher issued under this section may be used by the
6 student at any time and is not transferable.

7 SECTION 2. Section 25.087, Education Code, is amended by
8 adding Subsection (c) to read as follows:

9 (c) A school district may excuse a student in grades 6
10 through 12 for the purpose of sounding "Taps" at a military honors
11 funeral held in this state for a deceased veteran. A student whose
12 absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for
13 that absence and shall be counted as if the student attended school
14 for purposes of calculating the average daily attendance of
15 students in the school district. A student whose absence is excused
16 under this subsection shall be allowed a reasonable time to make up
17 school work missed on those days. If the student satisfactorily
18 completes the school work, the day of absence shall be counted as a
19 day of compulsory attendance.

20 SECTION 3. Subchapter D, Chapter 54, Education Code, is
21 amended by adding Section 54.215 to read as follows:

22 Sec. 54.215. PARTICIPANTS IN MILITARY FUNERALS. The
23 governing board of each institution of higher education shall
24 provide a \$25 exemption from tuition and required fees under this
25 chapter to a student in exchange for a voucher issued to the student
26 under Section 434.0072, Government Code, that is presented by the
27 student to the institution.

1 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
2 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
3 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
4 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
5 Act takes effect September 1, 2007.

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 1187 was passed by the House on April 13, 2007, by the following vote: Yeas 143, Nays 0, 2 present, not voting.

Chief Clerk of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 1187 was passed by the Senate on May 22, 2007, by the following vote: Yeas 31, Nays 0.

Secretary of the Senate

APPROVED: _____

Date

Governor