

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 2013  
By: Keffer  
Higher Education  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

The training required to be awarded a Texas Commission on Fire Protection Basic Structural certification mirrors the training required to be awarded a State Firemen's and Fire Marshal's Association of Texas (SFFMA) Advanced Accredited Volunteer certification or the Phase V (Firefighter II) certification under the Texas Commission on Fire Protection. Testing is included in the SFFMA program.

To date, approximately 1,200 persons have been certified under the SFFMA program. Approximately half of those certified no longer maintain their certification with the SFFMA. Many such persons were graduates of a firefighting academy, applied for and received SFFMA certification, and, after taking paid firefighting jobs, are no longer in the volunteer service. To date, the Texas Commission on Fire Protection has awarded 14 Phase IV (Firefighter II) volunteer certifications. A tuition and fee exemption for volunteer firefighters with certain certifications who are enrolled in fire science courses would increase volunteer firefighter retention and would be an incentive for volunteer firefighters to achieve the advanced certification.

C.S.H.B. 2013 extends an existing laboratory and tuition fee exemption for a student employed as a firefighter who is enrolled in a fire science course at an institution of higher education to a student enrolled in such a course who is an active member of a volunteer fire department in Texas and who holds an Accredited Advanced level of certification or Phase V (Firefighter II) certification.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

### **ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 2013 amends the Education Code to extend an existing tuition and laboratory fees exemption for a student enrolled in one or more courses offered as part of a fire science curriculum and who is employed as a firefighter by a political subdivision in Texas. The bill requires the governing board of an institution of higher education to exempt from the payment of tuition and laboratory fees any student enrolled in one or more such courses who is an active member of an organized volunteer fire department in Texas, as defined by the fire fighters' pension commissioner, and who holds either an Accredited Advanced level of certification, or an equivalent successor certification, under the State Firemen's and Fire Marshal's Association of Texas volunteer certification program, or Phase V (Firefighter II) certification, or an equivalent successor certification, under the Texas Commission on Fire Protection's voluntary certification program.

C.S.H.B. 2013 makes its provisions applicable beginning with tuition and laboratory fees charged for the 2009 fall semester.

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

On passage, or, if the act does not receive the necessary vote, the act takes effect September 1, 2009.

**COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE**

C.S.H.B. 2013 differs from the original by adding a provision specifying that the tuition and fees exemption for a volunteer firefighter enrolled in one or more fire science curriculum courses is based on the student's status as an active member of an organized volunteer fire department in Texas as defined by the fire fighter's pension commissioner, whereas the original does not specify such definition.