

By: Keffer, et al.

H.B. No. 2013

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to tuition and laboratory fee exemptions at public institutions of higher education for certain volunteer firefighters enrolled in fire science courses.

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

SECTION 1. Section 54.208, Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 54.208. FIREFIGHTERS [~~FIREMEN~~] ENROLLED IN FIRE SCIENCE COURSES. (a) The governing board of an institution of higher education [~~boards of the state institutions of collegiate rank supported in whole or in part by public funds~~] shall exempt from the payment of tuition and laboratory fees any student enrolled in one or more courses offered as part of a fire science curriculum who:

(1) [~~person who~~] is employed as a firefighter [~~fireman~~] by a [~~any~~] political subdivision of this [~~the~~] state; or

(2) is an active member of an organized volunteer fire department in this state, as defined by the fire fighters' pension commissioner, who holds:

(A) an Accredited Advanced level of certification, or an equivalent successor certification, under the State Firemen's and Fire Marshals' Association of Texas volunteer certification program; or

(B) Phase V (Firefighter II) certification, or an

1 equivalent successor certification, under the Texas Commission on
2 Fire Protection's voluntary certification program under Section
3 419.071, Government Code [~~and who enrolls in a course or courses~~
4 ~~offered as part of a fire science curriculum~~].

5 (b) An [~~The~~] exemption provided under this section does not
6 apply to deposits that [~~which~~] may be required in the nature of
7 security for the return or proper care of property loaned for the
8 use of students.

9 (c) Notwithstanding Subsection (a), a student who for a
10 semester or term at an institution of higher education receives an
11 exemption under this section may continue to receive the exemption
12 for a subsequent semester or term at any institution only if the
13 student makes satisfactory academic progress toward a degree or
14 certificate at that institution as determined by the institution
15 for purposes of financial aid.

16 (d) Notwithstanding Subsection (a), the exemption provided
17 under this section does not apply to any amount of additional
18 tuition the institution elects to charge a resident undergraduate
19 student under Section 54.014(a) or (f).

20 (e) Notwithstanding Subsection (a), the exemption provided
21 under this section does not apply to any amount of tuition the
22 institution charges a graduate student in excess of the amount of
23 tuition charged to similarly situated graduate students because the
24 student has a number of semester credit hours of doctoral work in
25 excess of the applicable number provided by Section 61.059(1)(1) or
26 (2).

27 (f) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall

1 adopt:

2 (1) rules governing the granting or denial of an
3 exemption under this section, including rules relating to the
4 determination of a student's eligibility for an exemption; and

5 (2) a uniform listing of degree programs covered by
6 the exemption under this section.

7 SECTION 2. A student who received an exemption under
8 Section 54.208, Education Code, before the 2009 fall semester may
9 continue to receive the exemption under the provisions of that
10 section as it existed immediately before the effective date of this
11 Act as long as the student remains enrolled in the same degree or
12 certificate program and is otherwise eligible to continue to
13 receive the exemption under that former law.

14 SECTION 3. The changes in law made by this Act to Section
15 54.208, Education Code, apply beginning with tuition and laboratory
16 fees charged for the 2009 fall semester. Tuition and laboratory
17 fees charged for an academic period before the 2009 fall semester
18 are covered by the law in effect immediately before the effective
19 date of this Act, and the former law is continued in effect for that
20 purpose.

21 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
22 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
23 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
24 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
25 Act takes effect September 1, 2009.