

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD

Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 81ST LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

April 17, 2009

TO: Honorable Dan Branch, Chair, House Committee on Higher Education

FROM: John S. O'Brien, Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: HB2013 by Keffer (relating to tuition and laboratory fee exemptions at public institutions of higher education for certain volunteer firefighters enrolled in fire science courses.),
Committee Report 1st House, Substituted

No significant fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.

The bill would extend the exemption program for firefighters enrolled in fire science curricula to volunteer firefighters who hold an Accredited Advanced level of certification or an equivalent under the State Firemen's and Fire Marshall's Association of Texas volunteer certification program or a phase V certification or equivalent successor certification under the Texas Commission on Fire Protection's voluntary certification program under Government Code, Section 419.071.

Based on information provided by the Higher Education Coordinating Board, in fiscal year 2008 a total of 1,706 paid firefighters received exemptions totaling \$1,394,202. Approximately 87% or 1,487 of the firefighters attended public community colleges and 11% or 193 attended public universities. The Texas State Firemen's and Fire Marshall's Association reported that there are approximately 18,000-20,000 paid firefighters in the state and approximately 20,000-30,000 volunteer firefighters, of whom 12,063 had the required credential.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board assumed the same share of volunteer firefighters would use the exemption as of paid firefighters, estimated to be 19,000. The Higher Education Coordinating Board multiplied the number with credentials (12,063) by the share of paid firefighters receiving exemptions (1,706/19,000). This indicated 1,083 volunteer firefighters would eventually use the exemption. $(12063 * (1706/19000)) = 1,083$. They further assumed 45% of this number would enroll in fiscal year 2010, growing by 10% per year resulting in 487 volunteer firefighters enrolling in fiscal year 2010, growing to 920 in fiscal year 2014. Based on these assumptions, it is estimated that the decreased tuition and fee revenue for the institutions would total \$620,869 in fiscal year 2010. These decreases would increase as more volunteer firefighters used the exemption.

Local Government Impact

No fiscal implication to units of local government is anticipated.

Source Agencies: 720 The University of Texas System Administration, 758 Texas State University System, 769 University of North Texas System Administration, 781 Higher Education Coordinating Board

LBB Staff: JOB, KK, RT, GO