

SUBJECT: Compliance with federal selective service registration requirements

COMMITTEE: Higher Education — favorable, with amendment

VOTE: 7 ayes — Rangel, Solis, Cuellar, Dunnam, Kamel, Rabuck, E. Reyna
0 nays
2 absent— Bailey, Rodriguez

WITNESSES: For — Gil Coronado
Against — None

BACKGROUND : Federal law requires most males between 18 and 26 years of age residing in the United States to register with the selective service system. Non-immigrant aliens are exempt from the requirement.

DIGEST: HB 2061 would prohibit students from enrolling in an institution of higher education if they did not file a statement of selective service status. Non-filers could not receive a loan, grant, scholarship, or other financial assistance funded by state revenue, including federal funds, gifts, and grants accepted by the state, nor a loan guaranteed by the state or the Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation.

In the statement of selective service status, an individual would certify that he had registered with the selective service system as required by federal law or were exempt from selective service registration under federal law. Students claiming exemption would have to specify the basis of the exemption.

Once a student had filed a statement, he would not be required to refile when enrolling in or making application for financial assistance to the same entity. If a student filed a statement indicating he was not required to register with the selective service system, he would have to file a new statement upon reenrolling or applying for financial aid.

HB 2061 would not apply to females, unless federal law subjected them to general selective service registration, or males over the maximum age for registration with the selective service.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board could make any necessary rules to administer HB 2061. The board would have to prescribe the form for a selective service statement by January 1, 1998, when the requirement for filing selective service statements would take effect.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

HB 2061 would follow the example of the federal government in encouraging compliance with selective service registration requirements. Penalties for not registering, provided by the Higher Education Act of 1965, include ineligibility for a variety of federal financial aid programs for students.

In some cases, students have unintentionally failed to register with selective service and been penalized by the loss of federal financial aid. HB 2061 would prevent this from happening by ensuring that all students entering college were aware of their obligations.

HB 2061 would not be burdensome to the students or to the schools. Most state applications for scholarships and financial aid have already conformed to the federal model, which requests a statement of selective service status. The coordinating board would have authority to determine the least burdensome means of implementing HB 2061. For instance, SB 150, proposing a common undergraduate application, has already passed both houses of the Legislature. If common application is finally approved, a statement of secret selective status could be included. The Legislative Budget Board has stated that HB 2061 would result in no fiscal implication to the state.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

HB 2061 would further extend the reach of a pointless and burdensome federal regulation into the State of Texas. The paperwork and staff time required to manage compliance with selective service regulations is extensive, and could increase with HB 2061. Admissions and financial officers would not have time to verify all the selective service statements they received; therefore, the bill would have little benefit.

Since the ending of the draft almost a quarter century ago, registration with selective service serves no real purpose, but the federal government continues to spend millions of dollars annually on its administration. The state should not become an accomplice in this unnecessary expenditure of tax dollars.

NOTES: The committee amendment would make nonsubstantive changes to allow the coordinating board to administer the program through current procedures.