

SUBJECT: Allowing revocation of enrollment for students over 18

COMMITTEE: Public Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 9 ayes — Sadler, Dutton, Dunnam, Grusendorf, Hochberg, Lengefeld, Oliveira, Olivo, Smith

0 nays

WITNESSES: For — Mary King, Texas Association of Secondary School Principals; Ed Paschal, Northeast ISD; Keith Baker

Against — None

On — David Anderson, Texas Education Agency

DIGEST: CSHB 907 would allow a school district to revoke the enrollment of a voluntarily enrolled student over 18 years old who had more than five unexcused absences in one semester. The revocation of enrollment would be effective for the remainder of the school year. The person whose enrollment was revoked would be considered an unauthorized person on school grounds.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house and would apply beginning with the 1999-2000 school year.

SUPPORTERS SAY: A number of older students enroll in school to receive social security benefits without ever intending to attend classes. These “students” often can disrupt the school environment when they are on campus. CSHB 907 would allow a district to revoke the enrollment of students over 18 who voluntarily enroll and do not make an effort to attend school. This authority would be entirely discretionary with the school district. Rather than placing a mandate on districts, reporting the revocation of an enrollment to another agency, such as the Social Security Administration, would be left to the discretion of the district.

These students are not subject to the compulsory attendance law, so school attendance policies cannot require them to attend. Districts have limited

authority to revoke the enrollment of these students for attendance. Including these students in the compulsory attendance law would be too burdensome on truancy officers, who already have too many students to try to keep tabs on.

The enrollment of these nonattending students also can result in inaccurate reporting in the accountability system by skewing the number of absentee students.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

CSHB 907 is unnecessary. All school districts have attendance policies that could allow a student to be removed from school for missing too many days of school.

If one purpose of this bill is to remove students who enroll only to receive a social security check, the bill would not necessarily solve that problem. The student could enroll and start receiving benefits, then be removed without losing the benefits. This bill should require districts to report these revocations of enrollment to the Social Security Administration.

OTHER
OPPONENTS
SAY:

Rather than allowing revocation of enrollment, the Legislature should expand the compulsory attendance law to include students who voluntarily enroll. That would ensure that those students attend classes.

NOTES:

The committee substitute would permit, rather than require, a district to revoke enrollment and would allow up to five unexcused absences before the student's enrollment was revoked.

The companion bill, SB 1137 by Wentworth, has been referred to the Senate Education Committee.

In the 75th Legislature, a similar bill, SB 471 by Luna, passed the Senate, but died in the House Public Education Committee.