

SUBJECT: Providing support services for college students in foster care

COMMITTEE: Higher Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 11 ayes — C. Turner, Stucky, Button, Frullo, Howard, E. Johnson,
Pacheco, Schaefer, Smithee, Walle, Wilson

0 nays

WITNESSES: For — Andrew Homer, Texas CASA; Toni Watt; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Marilyn Hartman and Eric Kunish, National Alliance on Mental Illness Austin; Lee Nichols, TexProtects; Nataly Saucedo, United Ways of Texas; Maria Person)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: CJ Grisham)

On — Debra Emerson, Department of Family and Protective Services;
Sarah Matteson

BACKGROUND: Education Code sec. 51.9356 requires each institution of higher education to designate at least one employee to act as a liaison officer for current and incoming students at the institution who were formerly in state conservatorship. The liaison officer must provide those students with information regarding support services and other available resources.

Some have noted that many eligible students are unaware of the services provided by the liaison officers.

DIGEST: CSHB 1702 would require institutions of higher education to identify students who are or were formerly in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services and to provide their names to the institution's liaison officer. Such identification would be made, to the extent allowed by state or federal law, each semester or academic term from information provided to the institution.

Each higher education institution would be required by January 1, 2020,

to publicize through its website, social media, email, or other means the name and contact information for the institution's liaison officer and information on support services and other resources available to students currently and formerly in foster care.

The liaison officer could participate in training and coordinate with liaison officers at other educational institutions.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2019.