

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center

H.B. 2347  
By: Thibaut, Guillen (Whitmire)  
Higher Education  
5/21/2009  
Engrossed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Currently, firefighters are exempt from the payment of tuition and fees to state institutions of higher education for courses that are part of a fire science curriculum. There is no similar exemption for peace officers who are enrolled in courses related to a criminal justice or law enforcement management curriculum. In an effort to improve the law enforcement profession, many believe that Texas peace officers should be encouraged to receive a college education. Providing a tuition exemption would enable more officers to obtain better training and education.

H.B. 2347 exempts peace officers employed by political subdivisions from the payment of tuition and fees to a state institution of higher education providing the officer is enrolled in a course or courses offered as part of a criminal justice or law enforcement management-related curriculum.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 (Section 54.208, Education Code) of this bill.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Section 54.208, Education Code, as follows:

Sec. 54.208. New heading: FIREFIGHTERS AND PEACE OFFICERS ENROLLED IN CERTAIN COURSES. (a) Creates this subsection from existing text. Requires the governing board of an institution of higher education, rather than the governing boards of the state institutions of collegiate rank supported in whole or in part by public funds, to exempt from the payment of tuition and laboratory fees a student who is employed as a firefighter by a political subdivision of this state, rather than any person who is employed as a fireman by any political subdivision of this state, and who enrolls in a course or courses offered as part of a fire science curriculum or is employed as a peace officer by the state or by a political subdivision of this state and who enrolls in a course or courses offered as part of a criminal justice or law enforcement management-related curriculum.

(b) Creates this subsection from existing text. Provides that an exemption provided under this section does not apply to deposits that may be required in the nature of security for the return or proper care of property loaned for the use of students. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

(c) Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to adopt rules governing the granting or denial of an exemption under this section, including rules relating to the determination of a student's eligibility for an exemption and a uniform listing of degree programs covered by the exemption under this section.

(d) Requires the governing board of the institution of higher education to report to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Appropriations Committee the cost to the institution of complying with this section for that semester if the legislature does not specifically appropriate funds to an institution of higher education in an amount sufficient to pay the institution's costs in complying with this section for a semester.

SECTION 2. Makes application of this Act prospective.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.