

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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H.B. 452
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Higher Education
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Although many foster youth desire to attend and graduate from college, studies show that less than five percent succeed in obtaining a bachelor's degree, compared to roughly a quarter of the general population.

While many barriers exist in the former foster youth's pursuit of higher education, lack of housing options in between academic terms represents a huge factor. While they may be able to call residential halls home during the school year, they have no home, family, or stable situation to depend on when school is out and many dorms are closed.

H.B. 452 seeks to ensure that former foster youths have living arrangements both during and between academic semesters. This bill requires institutions of higher education to help students find housing options to better support their education and social abilities.

H.B. 452 amends current law relating to temporary housing between academic terms for certain postsecondary students who have been under the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter Z, Chapter 51, Education Code, by adding Section 51.976, as follows:

Sec. 51.976. TEMPORARY HOUSING BETWEEN ACADEMIC TERMS FOR CERTAIN STUDENTS FORMERLY UNDER CONSERVATORSHIP OF DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES. (a) Defines, in this section, "institution of higher education" and "academic term."

(b) Requires a student, to be eligible to receive housing assistance from an institution of higher education under Subsection (c), to:

(1) have been under the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services or its predecessor in function on the day preceding:

(A) the student's 18th birthday; or

(B) the date the student's disabilities of minority are removed by a court under Chapter 31 (Removal of Disabilities of Minority), Family Code;

(2) be enrolled full-time at the institution during the academic term immediately preceding the period for which the student requests the housing assistance;

(3) be registered or otherwise have taken the actions required by the institution to permit the student to enroll full-time at the institution during the academic term immediately following the period for which the student requests the housing assistance; and

(4) lack other reasonable temporary housing alternatives between the academic terms described by Subdivisions (2) and (3), as determined by the institution.

(c) Requires each institution of higher education, on the student's request, to assist an eligible student in locating temporary housing for any period beginning on the last day of an academic term and ending on the first day of the immediately following academic term, according to the institution's academic calendar.

(d) Authorizes the institution, for each eligible student under Subsection (b) who also demonstrates financial need, to:

(1) provide a stipend to cover any reasonable costs of the temporary housing that are not covered by other financial aid immediately available to the student for that purpose; or

(2) provide temporary housing directly to the student for the applicable period.

(e) Provides that the receipt of a stipend under Subsection (d) does not prohibit the student from receiving additional stipends under that subsection in one or more subsequent periods, based on the student's demonstrated financial need.

(f) Authorizes an institution of higher education to use any available revenue, including legislative appropriations, and to solicit and accept gifts, grants, and donations for the purposes of this section. Requires the institution to use any gifts, grants, and donations received for the purposes of this section before using other revenue.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2011.