

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
85R3740 JRJ-F

H.B. 1117
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Veteran Affairs & Border Security
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program (TASSP) was created to support and encourage students who participate in ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) programs and who contract with a service branch to serve after graduation. To be awarded a scholarship, a student must meet certain criteria and be nominated by the governor, lieutenant governor, or his or her member of the legislature. The governor and lieutenant governor may nominate two students, and members may nominate one student, meaning that a total of only 185 students may receive initial awards each year.

The United States Marine Corps commissions many of their officers through their Platoon Leadership Class (PLC). These programs operate similar to ROTC programs, however separately from institutions of higher education. PLCs consist of two summer six-week sessions; the first between freshman and sophomore year, and the second during the following summer, or one 10-week session at the Marine Corps Officer Candidate School, located in Quantico, Virginia. Program participants meet twice a month during school for training.

H.B. 1117 makes PLCs an equivalent to ROTC programs as it relates to TASSP administered by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

H.B. 1117 amends current law relating to eligibility for the Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 4 of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 61.9772(a), Education Code, to require a student, to receive an initial scholarship under this subchapter, to enroll in and be a member in good standing of a Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program or another undergraduate officer commissioning program such as the United States Marine Corps Platoon Leaders Class while enrolled in a public or private institution of higher education in this state.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 61.9773(a), Education Code, to require a student, to receive a scholarship under this subchapter, to enter into an agreement with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) as provided by this section (Agreement Requirements). Requires that the agreement require the student to complete four years of ROTC training or complete another undergraduate officer commissioning program such as the United States Marine Corps Platoon Leaders Class.

SECTION 3. Provides that the changes in law made by this Act apply beginning with a Texas Armed Services Scholarship awarded for the 2017-2018 academic year. Provides that a Texas Armed Services Scholarship awarded for an academic year before that academic year is covered by the law in effect when the scholarship was awarded, and that law is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 4. Requires THECB to adopt rules for the administration of Sections 61.9772 (Eligibility; Nomination and Selection) and 61.9773, Education Code, as amended by this Act, as soon as practicable after this Act takes effect.

SECTION 5. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2017.