

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 554
By: Carona
Business & Commerce
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DIGEST AND PURPOSE

Currently, Texas does not provide any state financial assistance to students who attend private career colleges and schools. As proposed, S.B. 554 establishes the Texas Career Opportunity Grant Program to help ensure a qualified workforce to meet the needs of this state by reducing the financial barriers to postsecondary career education and training for economically disadvantaged Texans.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Workforce Commission in SECTION 1 (Sections 305.026 and 305.028, Labor Code), of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Title 4B, Labor Code, by adding Chapter 305, as follows:

CHAPTER 305. TEXAS CAREER OPPORTUNITY GRANT PROGRAM

SUBCHAPTER A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 305.001. PURPOSE. Sets forth the purpose of the program.

Sec. 305.002. DEFINITIONS. Defines “commission,” “coordinating board,” “eligible institution,” “public junior college,” and “qualified education program.” Reserves Sections 305.003-305.020 for expansion.

SUBCHAPTER B. GRANT PROGRAM

Sec. 305.021. TUITION ASSISTANCE GRANT; AMOUNT OF GRANT. (a) Authorizes the Texas Workforce Commission (commission) to provide tuition assistance grants to Texas residents enrolled in a qualified education program at an eligible institution.

(b) Requires the commission, in selecting applicants to receive grants under this chapter and the amount of the grant for each applicant, to consider certain factors.

Sec. 305.022. LIMITATIONS ON GRANT AMOUNT. (a) Prohibits the amount of a grant under this chapter from exceeding the lower of certain amounts.

(b) Prohibits the total amount of grants paid under this chapter on behalf of a student during a state fiscal year from exceeding an amount equal to 50 percent of the average state appropriation in the biennium preceding the biennium in which the grant is made for a full-time student or the equivalent at a public junior college or public technical institute, as determined by the coordinating board and certified to the commission.

(c) Requires the amount of the grant to a part-time student to be made on a pro-rata basis in relation to the amount of the grant the person would be entitled to receive if enrolled as a full-time student.

Sec. 305.023. APPROVAL OF INSTITUTIONS. Requires the commission to approve a proprietary school for its students to participate in the grant program established under this chapter if the school meets certain requirements.

Sec. 305.024. QUALIFIED EDUCATION PROGRAMS. Provides that for purposes of this chapter, a qualified education program is a postsecondary course of instruction in a specific career field that meets certain requirements.

Sec. 305.025. NONDISCRIMINATION. Requires the commission in administering this chapter to ensure compliance with Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. Section 2000d et seq.), in regard to nondiscrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

Sec. 305.026. APPLICATION; ELIGIBILITY FOR GRANT. (a) Requires a person, to receive a grant under this chapter, to apply to the commission in the manner provided by commission rule.

(b) Requires an applicant, to be eligible to receive a grant under this chapter, to meet certain requirements.

Sec. 305.027. PAYMENT OF GRANT. Requires the commission, on receipt of an enrollment report for a student awarded a grant under this chapter and certification of the amount of the student's financial need from the approved institution, to certify the amount of the grant awarded to the student.

(b) Requires that the grant be paid to the student through the eligible institution in which the student is enrolled.

Sec. 305.028. ADOPTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF RULES. (a) Authorizes the commission to adopt rules to administer and enforce this chapter.

(b) Requires the commission to distribute a copy of the rules to each eligible institution.

Sec. 305.029. ANNUAL REPORT. Requires the commission to prepare an annual report regarding the grant program established under this chapter. Requires the report to include certain information for the period covered by the report.

Sec. 305.030. INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION. (a) Authorizes the commission to award grants under this chapter for the 2001-2002 academic year only to a person attending the person's first academic year at an eligible institution.

(b) Authorizes the commission to award grants under this chapter for the 2002-2003 academic year only to a person attending the person's first or second academic year at an eligible institution.

(c) Provides that this section expires January 1, 2004.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2001.