

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1546
By: Janek
Subcommittee on Higher Education
6/29/2003
Enrolled

DIGEST AND PURPOSE

Current law prohibits a laboratory fee charged by a community or junior college from exceeding the cost of actual materials and supplies used by the student. The statute further limits the fee from exceeding \$24, even if the actual costs are significantly higher. Consequently, the excess cost is either placed on the local property taxpayers or onto the overall tuition charged to all students. S.B. 1546 eliminates the semester cap of \$24 and replaces it with a fee of up to \$24 per credit hour but not exceeding the actual cost of materials and supplies. S.B. 1546 authorizes the governing board of a public junior college to apply an additional fee of no more than \$4 per contact hour for a student enrolled in an aerospace mechanic certification program.

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 Sections 54.501(a) and (c), Education Code, as follows:

- (a) Requires an institution of higher education to set and collect a laboratory fee, rather than collect a laboratory charge, in an amount sufficient to cover the general cost of laboratory materials and supplies used by a student. Authorizes an institution other than a public junior college to charge a laboratory fee in an amount that is not less than \$2 nor more than \$30 for any one semester or summer term for a student in any one laboratory course, except that the amount of the laboratory fee may not exceed the cost of actual materials and supplies used by the student. Authorizes a public junior college to charge a laboratory fee in an amount that does not exceed the lesser of \$24 per semester credit hours of laboratory course credit for which the student is enrolled or the cost of actual materials and supplies used by the student.
- (c) Authorizes the governing board of a public junior college to set and collect a fee per contact hour, not to exceed \$4, for each person registered in an aerospace mechanics certification course where the fee is required to offset that portion of the cost of the course including the cost of equipment and of professional instruction or tutoring, that is not covered by state funding or by the fee in Subsection (a).

SECTION 2. Provides that the change in law made by this Act applies only to fees imposed for a semester or term that begins on or after the effective date of this Act.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2003.