

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2108
By: Berman
Higher Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Most universities across Texas have a central location or "hangout" for students on their campuses. The student union, or university center, is a vital part of university life for all students. A student union can give students a place to relax, eat, study, hangout with friends, and also encourage students to get involved with their university. A student union also provides the university with the space needed to hold cultural events and other programs designed to benefit the students, faculty, and staff of the university. The current University Center building features a bookstore and a small food service court on the first floor, while classrooms and faculty are housed on the second floor. This could hardly be recognized as being inviting to college students. With the expanding enrollment of UT Tyler, a student union is greatly needed. An extensive renovation and addition of the current University Center would benefit the growing student population, faculty, and staff of UT Tyler.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

SECTION 1 - Subchapter E, Chapter 54, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 54.5343 to allow the board of regents of The University of Texas System to levy a student union fee of no more than \$100 per student per semester, or summer term that is longer than six weeks. During summer terms shorter than six weeks, the fee may not exceed \$50 per student. The board of regents may not levy the fee or increase it by more than 10 percent per academic year unless it is approved by a majority of the students voting in a general election held for this purpose.

SECTION 2 - This Act only applies on the academic terms after the effective date of this Act.

SECTION 3 - Effective date.

EFFECTIVE DATE

This Act takes effect immediately if it receives two-thirds vote approval of all members elected to each house. Otherwise, this Act takes effect September 1, 2005.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

The substitute increases the fee maximum from \$75 per semester and \$40 per summer session in the introduced version, to \$100 and \$50, respectively. The differences between HB 2108 and CSHB 2108 are found in Section one of this Act. CSHB 2108 further specifies in Subsection (a) that the board can only levy a student union fee if authorized as under Subsection (b). Under Subsection (b) it further specifies that the board may not impose a fee unless the imposition of the fee is voted and approved by a majority of the student body. HB 2108 only states that the board of regents may levy a fee and that the students would only vote on whether or not the boards can raise the fee by 10 percent between academic years.