

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 523
By: Seliger
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The student senate at The University of Texas of the Permian Basin (university) conducted a fall 2006 survey asking if respondents would consider imposing a student fee for the construction and operation of a multi-purpose student center. Over 500 responses were received. Of the functions to be included in the proposed multi-purpose student center, respondents asked for a new food service facility, a recreational facility or gym, a childcare facility, a study area, and a game room. In January 2007, a referendum of the student body was conducted and found that 96 percent of the student voters were in favor of the construction and operation of the multi-purpose student center. Voting took place at the entrance to the main building over a two-day period. The student senate accepted the results and requested that the university seek authority to charge a fee for the construction and operation of the multi-purpose student center.

As proposed, S.B. 523 authorizes the university to charge a fee for enrolled students to finance the construction and operation of a student center.

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. Amends Subchapter E, Chapter 54 of the Education Code, by adding Section 54.5332 relating to fees for the student services building at the University of Texas of the Permian Basin.

Authorizes the board of regents of The University of Texas System (board) to charge each student enrolled at The University of Texas of the Permian Basin (university) a fee for the purpose of financing the construction or the operation of a student services building at the university. Prohibits the amount of the fee from exceeding \$150 for each regular semester, \$75 for each summer session of more than six weeks, or \$50 for each summer session of six weeks or shorter.

Provides that the amount of the fee may not be increased from one academic year to the next unless the amount of the increase is approved by a majority vote of the students participating in a general student election held for that purpose. Requires the university to collect the fee imposed under this section and deposit the collected money into an account to be known as the student services building account of the university. Provides that money in the account is authorized to be used only for the purposes described. Provides that a fee charged under this section is in addition to any other fee the board is authorized by law to charge at the university. Prohibits a fee charged under this section to be considered in determining the maximum student services fee authorized.

SECTION 2. Makes the application of this Act prospective to the 2007 fall semester.

SECTION 3. Effective date.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Upon passage, or, if the Act does not receive the necessary vote, the Act takes effect September 1, 2007.

