

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2961
By: Coleman
Higher Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

All fee increases to the University Center at the University of Houston must be approved by a majority vote of the students or a majority vote of the student government. The existing fee paid by students has been at the cap of \$35 since 2005 and students have expressed support for improving the University Center. Raising the ceiling does not impose a higher fee on students, nor does it endorse a specific project, but rather only permits the possibility of a fee increase that might fund a future project. On November 19, 2008, University of Houston students passed a referendum in support of a fee increase to transform the University Center. The University of Houston is requesting that the law be amended to raise the current cap on the University Center fee.

C.S.H.B. 2961 raises the cap on the amount of the student union fee that the University of Houston System board of regents may charge students at the University of Houston from \$35 to \$150 per student for each regular semester and from \$17.50 to \$75 per student for each term of the summer session.

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

C.S.H.B. 2961 amends the Education Code to raise the cap on the amount of the student union fee that the University of Houston System board of regents may charge students at the University of Houston from \$35 to \$150 per student for each regular semester and from \$17.50 to \$75 per student for each term of the summer session. The bill prohibits the fee from being charged after the fifth academic year in which the fee is first charged unless, before the end of that academic year, the university has issued bonds payable in whole or in part from the fee, in which event the fee is prohibited from being charged after the academic year in which all such bonds, including refunding bonds for those bonds, have been fully paid. The bill makes its provisions applicable beginning with student fees charged for the 2009-2010 academic year.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the act does not receive the necessary vote, the act takes effect September 1, 2009.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

C.S.H.B. 2961 adds a provision not in the original prohibiting the student union fee the University of Houston System board of regents may charge students at the University of Houston from being charged after the fifth academic year in which the fee is first charged unless, before the end of that academic year, the university has issued bonds payable in whole or in part from

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