

By: Edwards

H.B. No. 1957

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a limitation on the amount of tuition charged by public institutions of higher education.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subchapter B, Chapter 54, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 54.0514 to read as follows:

Sec. 54.0514. LIMITATION ON TOTAL AMOUNT OF TUITION. (a)

In this section, "tuition" includes:

(1) tuition for which the rates are prescribed by this chapter; and

(2) tuition charged by an institution of higher education under Section 54.0513 or another law authorizing an institution to establish tuition rates.

(b) The total amount of tuition charged by an institution of higher education to a student for an academic year may not exceed the total amount of tuition that the institution would have charged under this chapter to a similarly situated student for the 2008-2009 academic year. For purposes of this subsection, students are similarly situated if they share the same residency status, degree program, course load, course level, tuition exemption status, and other circumstances affecting the tuition charged to the student. This subsection does not ensure that the total amount of tuition charged to an individual student does not increase based on a change in the student's residency status, degree program,

1 course load, course level, tuition exemption status, or other  
2 circumstance affecting the tuition charged to the student.

3 SECTION 2. Sections 54.0513(a) and (b), Education Code, are  
4 amended to read as follows:

5 (a) In addition to amounts that a governing board of an  
6 institution of higher education is authorized to charge as tuition  
7 under the other provisions of this chapter, the governing board[~~7~~  
8 ~~under the terms the governing board considers appropriate,~~] may  
9 charge any student an amount designated as tuition not to exceed the  
10 amount that enables the institution to comply with Section 54.0514  
11 that the governing board considers necessary for the effective  
12 operation of the institution.

13 (b) Subject to the limit provided by Subsection (a) on the  
14 amount designated as tuition charged under this section, a [A]  
15 governing board may set a different tuition rate under this section  
16 for each program and course level offered by each institution of  
17 higher education[~~. A governing board may set a different tuition~~  
18 ~~rate~~] as the governing board considers appropriate to increase  
19 graduation rates, encourage efficient use of facilities, [~~or~~]  
20 enhance employee performance, or further another legitimate  
21 purpose of the institution.

22 SECTION 3. Sections 54.0515(e) and (f), Education Code, are  
23 amended to read as follows:

24 (e) It is the legislature's intent that each institution of  
25 higher education[~~, as a condition to tuition deregulation under~~  
26 ~~Section 54.0513,~~] reasonably implement the following:

27 (1) each institution shall make satisfactory progress

1 towards the goals provided in its master plan for higher education  
2 and in "Closing the Gaps," the state's master plan for higher  
3 education; and

4 (2) each institution shall meet acceptable  
5 performance criteria, including measures such as graduation rates,  
6 retention rates, enrollment growth, educational quality, efforts  
7 to enhance minority participation, opportunities for financial  
8 aid, and affordability.

9 (f) The committee shall:

10 (1) meet at the call of either chair;

11 (2) monitor and regularly report to the legislature on  
12 each institution of higher education's compliance with the  
13 requirements of Subsection (e); and

14 (3) receive and review information concerning the  
15 affordability and accessibility of higher education~~[, including~~  
16 ~~the impact of tuition deregulation]~~.

17 SECTION 4. (a) This Act applies beginning with tuition  
18 charged by public institutions of higher education for the 2009  
19 fall semester. Tuition charged by an institution of higher  
20 education in an academic period before that semester is covered by  
21 the law in effect before the effective date of this Act, and the  
22 former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

23 (b) If before the effective date of this Act a student has  
24 paid an amount of tuition for the 2009 fall semester in excess of  
25 the maximum amount permitted by Section 54.0514, Education Code, as  
26 added by this Act, the institution the student attends shall refund  
27 to the student the excess amount of tuition paid.

1           SECTION 5. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
2 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
3 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
4 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
5 Act takes effect September 1, 2009.