

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.S.B. 537
By: Hinojosa
Higher Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties note the burden placed on college students by the rising costs of special course fees, such as online access fees and lab fees. C.S.S.B. 537 seeks to address this issue by requiring the disclosure of special course fees at public institutions of higher education so that students may prepare accordingly.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

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.S.B. 537 amends the Education Code to require each public institution of higher education to include in the institution's online course catalog, for each course listed in the catalog, a description and the amount of any special course fee, including an online access fee or lab fee, to be charged specifically for the course. If the institution publishes a paper course catalog, the institution may publish any fees specifically charged for each course using the amounts charged in the most recent academic year. The bill applies beginning with course catalogs published for the 2018-2019 academic year.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2017.

COMPARISON OF SENATE ENGROSSED AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.S.B. 537 may differ from the engrossed in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following comparison is organized and formatted in a manner that indicates the substantial differences between the engrossed and committee substitute versions of the bill.

SENATE ENGROSSED

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 54, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 54.0051 to read as follows:
Sec. 54.0051. REQUIRED DISCLOSURE

HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 54, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 54.0051 to read as follows:
Sec. 54.0051. DISCLOSURE OF COURSE

OF COURSE FEES IN COURSE CATALOG. Each institution of higher education shall include in the institution's course catalog, for each course listed in the catalog, a description and the amount of any special course fee, including an online access fee or lab fee, to be charged specifically for the course.

SECTION 2. Section 54.0051, Education Code, as added by this Act, applies beginning with course catalogs published for the 2018-2019 academic year.

SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2017.

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SECTION 2. Same as engrossed version.

SECTION 3. Same as engrossed version.