

By: Dutton

H.B. No. 112

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 an amount equal to 85 percent of the total amount of tuition that the institution would have charged under this chapter to a similarly situated student for the 2016-2017 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

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

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

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

14 (b) Subject to the limit provided by Subsection (a) on the  
15 amount designated as tuition charged under this section, a [A]  
16 governing board may set a different tuition rate under this section  
17 for each program and course level offered by each institution of  
18 higher education[~~7~~. ~~A governing board may set a different tuition~~  
19 ~~rate~~] as the governing board considers appropriate to increase  
20 graduation rates, encourage efficient use of facilities, [~~or~~  
21 enhance employee performance, or further another legitimate  
22 purpose of the institution.

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

25 (e) It is the legislature's intent that each institution of  
26 higher education[~~7~~, ~~as a condition to tuition deregulation under~~  
27 ~~Section 54.0513,~~] reasonably implement the following:

1           (1) each institution shall make satisfactory progress  
2 towards the goals provided in its master plan for higher education  
3 and in "Closing the Gaps," the state's master plan for higher  
4 education; and

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

10          (f) The committee shall:

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

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

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

18          SECTION 4. (a) This Act applies beginning with tuition  
19 charged by public institutions of higher education for the 2017  
20 fall semester. Tuition charged by an institution of higher  
21 education in an academic period before that semester is covered by  
22 the law in effect before the effective date of this Act, and the  
23 former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

24          (b) If before the effective date of this Act a student has  
25 paid an amount of tuition for the 2017 fall semester in excess of  
26 the maximum amount permitted by Section 54.0514, Education Code, as  
27 added by this Act, the institution the student attends shall refund

1 to the student the excess amount of tuition paid.

2           SECTION 5. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
3 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
4 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
5 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
6 Act takes effect September 1, 2017.