

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
86R32501 SOS-F

C.S.H.B. 2718
By: Turner, Chris (West)
Higher Education
5/17/2019
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The University of Texas at Arlington's (UT-Arlington) student union was originally constructed in 1951. The student union fee increased from \$15 per semester to \$39 per semester in 1985 and has not increased since that change more than 34 years ago. However, student enrollment has increased 90 percent from 22,121 in fall 1995 to 42,496 in fall 2018.

With this substantial growth in the student population, additional space and services are necessary to meet the institution's. The current \$39 per semester fee is significantly lower than at other Texas institutions. The fee at the University of North Texas is \$167, University of Houston is \$145, the University of Texas at San Antonio is \$120, and Texas A&M and Texas State University are both \$100. In addition, each of these schools have completed major renovations of their student union facilities within the last ten years, putting UT-Arlington's student union below our Texas peer institutions in regards to quality of facility.

The fee increase would be contingent upon majority vote by students participating in a general election within one year and fees collected and would only be used for financing, constructing, operating and maintaining the student union building. (Original Author's/Sponsor's Statement of Intent)

C.S.H.B. 2718 amends current law relating to authorizing an increase in the student union fee at The University of Texas at Arlington.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 54.529(a), Education Code, as follows:

(a) Authorizes the board of regents of The University of Texas System (board) to levy a student union fee not to exceed \$150 per student for each regular semester and not to exceed \$75 per student for each term of the summer session, rather than authorizing the board to levy a student union fee not to exceed \$39 per student for each regular semester and not to exceed \$19.50 per student for each term of the summer session, for the sole purpose of financing, constructing, operating, maintaining, and improving the Student Union Building for The University of Texas at Arlington. Prohibits the fee from being increased above an amount previously levied unless the increase is approved by a majority vote of those students participating in a general election held at the university for that purpose, rather than prohibiting the fee from being increased above \$15 per student for each regular semester and \$7.50 per student for each term of the summer session unless the increase is approved by a majority vote of those students participating in a general election. Requires the ballot proposition for such an election to clearly state the amount of proposed fee increase and describe the reason for the proposed fee increase.

SECTION 2. Provides that Section 54.529(a), Education Code, as amended by this Act, applies beginning with fees imposed for the 2019 fall semester.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2019.