

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1678
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Higher Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The University of North Texas at Dallas (UNT) is beginning the creation of an intercollegiate program and needs legislative authorization to allow the self-assessment and collection of an athletics fee. As UNT grows and matures as an institution of higher education, a successful athletics program will be a pillar in the growth and reputation of the institution. Athletics programs provide unique opportunities for a university and the students it serves, helping to create school pride, spirit and tradition. They can also generate media attention and strengthen a university's brand.

UNT is proudly rooted in the city of Dallas, engaging with its surrounding communities. The overwhelming majority of the UNT student body is comprised of individuals that reside within a 30-mile radius of the campus. The university is touted as an educational beacon for Dallas, and has provided residents opportunities historically considered lacking or unattainable. The university's vision statement is to "empower students, transforms lives and strengthen communities." An athletics program would serve to further strengthen our community through lasting shared activities, traditions, and play.

S.B. 1678 would create a mechanism for the establishment of an athletics fee that would not be imposed unless approved by a majority vote of the students of the university who participate in a general student election held for that purpose. It is the university's intention that no fee would be levied prior to the fall of 2020. The UNT Student Government Association will develop the referendum and determine the amount of the proposed fee.

As proposed, S.B. 1678 amends current law relating to an intercollegiate athletics fee at the University of North Texas at Dallas.

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 Subchapter E, Chapter 54, Education Code, by adding Section 54.5192, as follows:

Sec. 54.5192. INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS FEE; UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS AT DALLAS. (a) Authorizes the board of regents of the University of North Texas System to charge each student enrolled at the University of North Texas at Dallas an intercollegiate athletics fee in an initial amount not to exceed \$10 per semester credit hour for each semester or summer session. Authorizes the amount of the fee to be increased only as provided by Subsection (e).

(b) Requires a student enrolled in more than 12 semester credit hours to pay the fee in an amount equal to the amount charged a student enrolled in 12 semester credit hours during the same semester or session.

(c) Authorizes revenue from the fee charged under this section to be used only for financing, constructing, operating, maintaining, or improving an athletic facility or for operating an intercollegiate athletics program at the university.

(d) Prohibits the fee from being charged unless approved by a majority vote of the students enrolled at the university who participate in a general student election held for that purpose. Requires the ballot for the election to approve the fee to state a maximum amount of the fee that may be charged per semester credit hour, not to exceed the maximum amount prescribed by Subsection (a).

(e) Authorizes the amount of the fee per semester credit hour to be increased from one academic year to the next only if approved by a majority vote of the students participating in a general student election held for that purpose or, if the amount of the increase does not exceed five percent, by a majority vote of the legislative body of the student government of the university.

(f) Requires the chief fiscal officer of the university to collect the fee and to deposit the revenue from the fee in an account to be known as the intercollegiate athletics fee account.

(g) Provides that a fee charged under this section is in addition to any other fee authorized by law and prohibits it from being considered in determining the maximum amount of student services fees that may be charged each student enrolled at the university under Section 54.503 (Student Services Fees).

SECTION 2. Prohibits a fee from being charged under Section 54.5192, Education Code, as added by this Act, before the 2020 fall semester.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2019.