

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1531
By: West
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been suggested that improvements are needed to achieve the state's goal of incentivizing timely completion of degree programs, particularly at the community college level, where concerns have been raised regarding insufficient monitoring of credit accumulation in support of a specific degree pathway. S.B. 1531 seeks to address this issue by setting a threshold of 15 semester credit hours in excess of those required for an associate degree plan, beyond which any additional hours may not be supported by formula funding, and by allowing a public institution of higher education to charge a higher tuition rate for classes exceeding that threshold.

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

S.B. 1531 amends the Education Code to lower the threshold number of semester credit hours, in addition to the total required for a student's degree plan, above which a public institution of higher education may charge a resident undergraduate student a higher rate of tuition for excessive semester credit hours from 30 hours to 15 hours for a student enrolled in an associate degree program. The bill removes language relating to the method of determining excessive semester credit hours for an undergraduate student who is not enrolled in a degree program and establishes instead that such a student is considered to be enrolled in a baccalaureate degree program. These provisions apply beginning with tuition charged for the 2023 fall semester.

S.B. 1531 revises provisions excluding any excessive semester credit hours earned by a resident undergraduate student from formula funding calculations to reflect the threshold change and to reflect the default classification of a student who is not enrolled in a degree program as a baccalaureate degree student for tuition purposes. The bill's provisions relating to the funding formula apply beginning with funding recommendations made for the state fiscal biennium beginning September 1, 2023.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2021.