

SUBJECT: Requiring disclosure of special course fees in course catalogs

COMMITTEE: Higher Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 8 ayes — Lozano, Raney, Alonzo, Alvarado, Button, Howard, Morrison, Turner
0 nays
1 absent — Clardy

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, May 3 — 31-0

WITNESSES: For — None
Against — None
On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Julie Eklund, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board)

BACKGROUND: Observers note that institutions of higher education do not always include information in their course catalogs on special fees required for some courses, and some argue that students should have access to this information.

DIGEST: CSSB 537 would require institutions of higher education to include in the institution's online course catalog the description and amount of any special course fee, including an online access fee or lab fee, to be charged for each course. A published, hard-copy catalog could include fee information from the most recent academic year.

This bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2017, and would apply beginning with course catalogs published for the 2018-19 academic year.