

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
79R9321 CAS-F

H.B. 2108
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S/C on Higher Education
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S/SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

A student union or university center is a vital part of university life for all students. It provides students a place to relax, eat, and study, as well as encourages students to get involved with their university. A student union also provides the university with the space needed to hold cultural events and other programs designed to benefit the students, faculty and staff. The current University of Texas at Tyler (UT-Tyler) University Center building features a bookstore and a small food service court on the first floor, while classrooms and faculty are housed on the second floor. With the expanding enrollment of UT-Tyler, a student union is greatly needed. An extensive renovation and addition of the current university center would benefit the growing student population, faculty and staff of UT-Tyler.

As engrossed, H.B. 2108 authorizes the imposition of a student union fee at The University of Texas at Tyler. In a referendum held on March 29 and 30, 2005, the students at all three campuses—Tyler, Palestine, and Longview—voted in favor of the fee.

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 54.5343, as follows:

Sec. 54.5343. STUDENT UNION FEE; THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER.

(a) Authorizes the board of regents of The University of Texas System (board) to impose on each student enrolled at The University of Texas at Tyler a student union fee for the purpose of providing revenue for financing, constructing, operating, maintaining, renovating, improving, or equipping a student union building for the university if authorized under Subsection (b). Prohibits the fee from exceeding a certain amount.

(b) Prohibits the board from imposing a student union fee under this section unless imposition of the fee is approved by a majority of the university's students voting in a general student election called for that purpose. Prohibits the board from increasing the amount of the student union fee under this section by more than 10 percent from one academic year to the next unless the amount of the increase is approved by a majority of the university's students voting in a general student election called for that purpose.

(c) Requires the fiscal officer of The University of Texas at Tyler to collect the fees imposed under this section and to credit the money received from the fees to an account known as The University of Texas at Tyler student union fee account. Authorizes the money in the account to be used only for the purposes provided by Subsection (a) and requires it to be placed under the control of and subject to the order of the Student Union Advisory Committee. Requires the committee to annually submit to the president of the university a complete and itemized budget accompanied by a full and complete report of all activities conducted during the preceding year and all expenditures made in connection with those activities. Requires the president to submit the budget to the board as part of the institutional

budget. Requires the board to make the changes in the budget as the board considers necessary before approving the budget and to impose the fees in an amount sufficient to meet the budgetary needs of the student union, subject to Subsection (b).

(d) Authorizes the board to pledge revenue from the fees imposed under this section to pay obligations issued for authorized purposes pursuant to the revenue financing system of The University of Texas System.

(e) Provides that a student union fee imposed under this section is in addition to any other fee the board of regents is authorized by law to impose and is prohibited from being considered in determining the maximum student services fee.

SECTION 2. Makes application of Section 54.5343, Education Code, as added by this Act, prospective.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2005.