

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

C.S.H.B. 1172
By: Brown, Fred (Zaffirini)
Education
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Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S/SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Current law allows Texas college students to take an excess of 45 credit hours above their degree program before the institution may charge a higher tuition rate. In addition, the state continues to contribute funding for students enrolled in an institution of higher education up to the 45 credit hour limit. This 45 credit hour limit represents substantial costs to the State of Texas and contributes to the length of time it takes the student to graduate.

C.S.H.B. 1172 provides that institutions of higher education may charge students a higher tuition rate for any credit hours that are equal to or greater than 115 percent of the required degree program hours. In addition, the state will not contribute funding for students who exceed 115 percent of their degree program requirements. The intention of C.S.H.B. 1172 is to save the state money and decrease the length of time which it takes a student to graduate.

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 H, Chapter 51, Education Code, by adding Section 51.4032, as follows:

Sec. 51.4032. REPORT OF EFFORTS CONCERNING TIMELY GRADUATION. (a) Requires the president of each general academic teaching institution, as defined by Section 61.003, not later than November 1 of each year, to provide to the governing board of the institution a report for the preceding academic year that examines the institution's efforts concerning timely graduation of its undergraduate students.

(b) Requires the report to state certain information relating to the undergraduate student programs and students.

(c) Requires an institution's report to be in the form prescribed by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (coordinating board) rule adopted in consultation with general academic teaching institution.

SECTION 2. Amends Sections 54.068, Education Code, as follows:

Sec. 54.068. New heading: TUITION FOR REPEATED OR EXCESSIVE UNDERGRADUATE HOURS. (a) Authorizes an institution of higher education to charge a resident undergraduate student tuition at a higher rate than the rate charged to other resident undergraduate students, not to exceed the rate charged to nonresident undergraduate students, if before the semester or other academic session begins the student has previously attempted a number of semester credit hours for courses taken at any institution of higher education while classified as a resident student for tuition purposes that exceeds by at least 30, rather than 45, hours the number of semester credit hours required for completion of the degree program in which the student is enrolled. Provides that, for purposes of this subsection, an undergraduate student is considered to be enrolled in a degree program or programs requiring a minimum of 120 semester credit hours, including minors and double majors, and for completion of any certificate or other

special program in which the student is also enrolled, including a program in which the student is also enrolled, including a program with a study-abroad component. Authorizes an institution of higher education that charges students tuition at a higher rate under this subsection to adopt a policy under which the institution exempts from the payment of that higher rate a student that is subject to the payment of the higher rate solely as a result of hardship as determined by the institution under that policy. Makes conforming changes.

(b) Makes no changes to this subsection.

(c) Provides that Subsection (a) applies only, rather than does not apply, to the tuition charged to a student who initially enrolled as an undergraduate student in an institution of higher education during or after, rather than before, the 1999 fall semester, except that the institution of higher education is prohibited from requiring a student who initially enrolls as an undergraduate student in an institution of higher education before the 2006 fall semester to pay higher tuition as permitted by Subsection (a) until the number of semester credit hours previously attempted by the student as described by that subsection exceeds the number of semester credit hours required for the student's degree program or programs by at least 45 hours.

(d) Makes a conforming change.

(e) Requires each institution of higher education to inform each new undergraduate student enrolling at the institution in writing of the limitation provided by this section on the number of hours or types of courses that a Texas resident is entitled to complete while paying tuition at the rate provided for Texas residents.

(f) Authorizes an institution of higher education to charge a resident undergraduate student tuition at a higher rate than the rate charged to other resident undergraduate students, not to exceed the rate charged to nonresident undergraduate students, for any course in which the student enrolls that is the same as or substantively identical to a course for which the student previously completed. Requires the coordinating board that exempts a resident undergraduate student from this subsection if the student enrolls in a course that is the same as or substantially similar to a course that the student previously completed, solely as a result of a hardship or other good cause.

SECTION 3. Amends Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, by adding Section 61.0515, as follows:

Sec. 61.0515. SEMESTER CREDIT HOURS REQUIRED FOR BACCALAUREATE DEGREE. (a) Prohibits a student, to earn a baccalaureate degree, from being required by a general academic teaching institution to complete more than the minimum number of semester credit hours required for the degree by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools or its successor unless the institution determines that there is a compelling academic reason for requiring completion of additional semester credit hours for the degree.

(b) Authorizes the coordinating board to review one or more of the institution's baccalaureate degree programs to ensure compliance with this section.

(c) Provides that Subsection (a) does not apply to a baccalaureate degree awarded by an institution to a student enrolled in the institution before the 2008 fall semester. Provides that this subsection does not prohibit the institution from reducing the number of semester credit hours the student must complete to receive the degree.

SECTION 4. Amends Section 61.0595, Education Code, by amending Subsections (a) and (e) and adding Subsection (f), as follows:

(a) Makes conforming changes.

(e) Provides that Subsection (a) applies only to funding for semester credit hours earned by a student who initially enrolled as an undergraduate student in any institution of higher education during or after the 1999 fall semester, except that with respect to semester credit hours earned by a student who initially enrolls as an undergraduate student in any institution of higher education before the 2006 fall semester, prohibits the coordinating board from reducing funding under this section until the number of semester credit hours previously attempted by the student as described by this section exceeds the number of semester credit hours required for the student's degree program by at least 45 hours.

(f) Requires the coordinating board, in the formulas established under Section 61.059 (Appropriations), to include without consideration of Subsection (a) funding for semester credit hours earned by a student who initially enrolled as an undergraduate student in any institution of higher education before the 1999 fall semester. Deletes existing text relating to semester credit hours without consideration of Subsection (a).

(g) Requires the savings to the state resulting from the exclusion of funding for excess undergraduate semester credit hours from the funding formulas of the board as required by this section, to the extent practicable, to be used to finance the Toward Excellence, Access, & Success (TEXAS) grant program under Subchapter M (Toward Excellence, Access, & Success (TEXAS) grant program), Chapter 56.

SECTION 5. (a) Provides that the changes in law made by this Act to Sections 54.068 and 61.0595, Education Code, apply beginning with the 2005 fall semester.

(b) Requires the coordinating board, not later than May 31, 2006, to adopt the rules required by Section 61.0515, Education Code, as added by this Act, relating to the number of semester credit hours required for completion of a baccalaureate degree program at a general academic teaching institution.

(c) Requires the coordinating board, not later than May 31, 2006, to develop recommendations for the core curriculum to conform to the requirements of Section 61.822, Education Code, as amended by this Act. Requires each public institution of higher education in this state to revise its core curriculum as necessary to conform to the requirements of Section 61.822, Education Code, as amended by this Act, and to require students to comply with the institution's revised core curriculum beginning with the 2008 fall semester, except that an institution is required to permit a student who was enrolled in the institution before the 2008 fall semester to comply with the core curriculum requirements applicable to that student before that semester. Require each institution of higher education to issue course catalogs that reflect the applicable core curriculum under Section 61.822, Education Code, consistent with this subsection. Provides that this subsection expires at the beginning of the 2010 fall semester.

(d) Makes application of Section 61.822(c), Education Code, of this Act, prospective to the beginning of the 2008 fall semester.

SECTION 6. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2005.