

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 850
By: Luna
Finance
3-11-97
As Filed

DIGEST

Currently, the University of Texas at San Antonio (university) charges students a flat fee of \$30 to cover the costs associated with its student union. In the fall of 1996, the university dedicated its expanded student union, which more than tripled the space available for student programs and activities at the university. Use of the new student union has been heavy, with increasing numbers of students involved in campus life and 140 student organizations. The university maintains that the current fee is not sufficient to cover costs and growing student demand for programs. This bill would authorize the university to levy a student union fee of not less than \$20 and not more than \$75 for each semester or summer session, to be assessed in proportion to the number of credit hours for which a student registers. S.B. 850 would also prohibit the university from increasing the fee by more than 10 percent in any academic year unless the amount is approved by the students in an election.

PURPOSE

As proposed, S.B. 850 authorizes the University of Texas at San Antonio to levy a student union fee of \$20 to \$75 per semester or summer session and requires the amount of the fee paid by a student to be based upon the number of credit hours for which the student is registered.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 54.532, Education Code, to authorize the board of regents (board) of the University of Texas System to levy a student union fee of not less than \$20 or more than \$75 for each semester or summer session, assessed in proportion to the number of credit hours for which a student registers, for the sole purpose of financing, operating, maintaining, and improving a student union building for the University of Texas at San Antonio. Deletes text authorizing the levy of a student union fee and the use of fees for a student union building. Authorizes this fee to be levied in addition to any other use or service fee.

(b) Deletes text regarding a student referendum.

(c) Prohibits the board from increasing the amount of the student union fee by more than 10 percent in any academic year unless the amount of the increase is approved by a majority of the students voting in an election held for that purpose or by a majority of the student government of the institution.

SECTION 2. Makes application of this Act prospective. Provides that notwithstanding Section 54.532, Education Code, as amended by this Act, the maximum amount of the student union fee per student under that section for the 1997 fall semester is \$44.

SECTION 3. Emergency clause.

Effective date: upon passage.