

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 531
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S/C on Higher Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S/SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

During the 78th Legislature, Regular Session, the legislature approved Rider 50 to control costs and limit general revenue formula appropriations by excluding contact hours or semester credit hours related to a course for which a student is generating formula funding for the third time from being counted for formula funding.

Due to their mission of serving the most academically under-prepared Texans, last biennium community colleges across the state offered hundreds of thousands of contact hours during the last biennium for which they were not reimbursed, resulting in millions of dollars of losses.

By allowing community colleges to charge a higher rate of tuition for these repeated courses, community colleges can encourage completion by continuing to offer students the opportunity to re-attempt courses if they are willing to pay the cost of instruction.

Thus, students would continue to have access to the courses they need, and community colleges would be able to recover the cost of instruction. The extra costs of taking a course more than twice would serve as an incentive to finish a course on the first or second attempt, ultimately improving retention and lowering costs to the state and community colleges.

As proposed, S.B. 531 would allow community colleges to charge a student a higher rate of tuition than would otherwise be charged for a course which the student enrolls if the student has previously enrolled in the same course or a course of substantially the same content and level two or more times.

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 A, Chapter 130, Education Code, by adding Section 130.0034, as follows:

Sec. 130.0034. TUITION FOR REPEATED COURSES. (a) Authorizes the governing board of a public junior college district to charge a student a higher rate of tuition than would otherwise be charged for a course in which the student enrolls if the student has previously enrolled in the same course or a course of substantially the same content and level two or more times after the 2003-2004 academic year.

(b) Provides that this section does not apply to a non-degree-credit developmental course.

(c) Prohibits the total amount of tuition charged to the student for the repeated course from exceeding the full cost of instruction for the course with respect to the student.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2005.