

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
85R4311 KSD-D

S.B. 19
By: Seliger
Higher Education
3/20/2017
As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

With the continuing rise of college tuition across the nation, access and affordability are both major points of discussion. Since tuition deregulation in 2003, tuition costs in Texas have risen 147 percent, while the amount institutions spend on instruction has risen only 65 percent. These rising costs have made it difficult for students and their families to afford getting a higher education degree, at a time when the job market is demanding more persons with a credential or degree.

S.B. 19 freezes tuition costs at the 2016-2017 school year levels for general academic institutions for four years. Additionally, S.B. 19 freezes student fee costs at their current levels for four years.

As proposed, S.B. 19 amends current law relating to temporary limitations on the amount of tuition and fees charged by certain public institutions of higher education.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 (Section 54.0514, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter B, Chapter 54, Education Code, by adding Section 54.0514, as follows:

Sec. 54.0514. TEMPORARY LIMITATION ON TOTAL AMOUNT OF TUITION. (a) Defines "general academic teaching institution" and "tuition."

(b) Prohibits the total amount of tuition charged by a general academic teaching institution (institution) to a student for the 2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2020-2021, or 2021-2022 academic year, notwithstanding Section 54.0513 (Designated Tuition) or other applicable law authorizing an institution to establish tuition rates, from exceeding the total amount of tuition that the institution would have charged under this chapter to a similarly situated student for the 2016-2017 academic year.

(c) Provides that, for purposes of this section, students are similarly situated if they share the same residency status, degree program, course load, course level, tuition exemption status, and other circumstances affecting the tuition charged to the student.

(d) Provides that this section does not ensure that the total amount of tuition charged to an individual student does not increase based on a change in certain circumstances relating to the student's academic, residency, or tuition status.

(e) Authorizes the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to adopt rules as necessary to administer this section.

(f) Provides that this section expires August 31, 2022.

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter E, Chapter 54, Education Code, by adding Section 54.5001, as follows:

Sec. 54.5001. TEMPORARY LIMITATIONS ON FEE INCREASES. (a) Defines "general academic teaching institution."

(b) Prohibits the governing board of an institution, notwithstanding any other provision of this subchapter or other law, from charging a fee under this subchapter in an amount that is greater than the amount of the fee charged in the 2016-2017 academic year, in each of the 2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2020-2021, and 2021-2022 academic years.

(c) Provides that the limitation provided by this section applies to a fee even if an increase in the amount of the fee is approved by a vote of the students, student government, or student fee advisory committee of the general academic teaching institution.

(d) Provides that this section expires August 31, 2022.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2017.