

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 6481

AS PASSED SENATE, FEBRUARY 11, 1994

Brief Description: Requiring approval by an institution of higher education's governing board and services and activities fees committee before shifting budgeted services and activities fees.

SPONSORS: Senate Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Bauer, Prince, West, Sellar, Morton, Drew, Rinehart, A. Smith and Sheldon)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6481 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Bauer, Chairman; Drew, Vice Chairman; Cantu, Prince, Quigley, Sheldon and West.

Staff: Scott Huntley (786-7421)

Hearing Dates: February 2, 1994; February 4, 1994

BACKGROUND:

Services and activities fees are statutorily defined to mean fees which are charged to all students and are used to fund student activities and programs. These fees are also dedicated to repaying bonds and other indebtedness for facilities such as dormitories, hospitals, dining halls, parking facilities, and student, faculty and employee housing.

By law, the governing boards of the state institutions of higher education have the final authority for adopting a services and activities fees budget. The governing boards also have the responsibility to charge and collect the fees from each student, and within limits set by law, to establish the level of the services and activities fees at their respective institutions.

In 1990, legislation was enacted which strengthened the role of students in recommending and negotiating the budget for services and activities fees at the respective institutions. This legislation gave the Services and Activities Fee (S & A) Committee, which has a mandated student majority, the ability to propose program priorities and budget levels directly to the governing board, rather than through the college administration. The governing board is directed to give priority consideration to student desires in budget areas that do not impact the stability of programs affecting students, pre-existing contractual obligations, or bond covenants.

SUMMARY:

The services and activities fee process is changed so that both the governing board and the S&A fee committee must give express approval to any shifting of S&A fee moneys once the budget for those moneys has been established.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested January 24, 1994

TESTIMONY FOR (original bill):

The students should have full control of student program fees. The administration at certain colleges have engaged in the practice of shifting moneys without taking student concerns into account. The governing boards shouldn't have the ability to veto student priorities for these student moneys.

TESTIMONY AGAINST (original bill):

The present S&A fee budgeting process has worked well and this bill will remove accountability from that process. The bill undermines the authority of the governing boards, without solving any problems. The supporters of the bill have not identified any problems with the existing process. The governing board should have some involvement in the process for budgeting and spending these moneys.

TESTIFIED (original bill): Jack Dutra, Grays Harbor Community College (con); Christopher Yates, South Puget Sound Community College (con); Sherry Burkey, University of Washington (con); Mary Marcey, Central Washington University (con); George Durrie, Eastern Washington University (con); Steve Lindstrom, Washington Student Lobby (pro); Todd McGee, Associated Students of UW (pro); Heather Flodstrom, Associated Students of CWU (pro); Piragha Walla, President, Associated Students of UW (pro)