

Higher Education Committee

HB 2006

Brief Description: *Authorizing the imposition or expenditure of student fees by a two-thirds vote.*

Sponsors: *Representatives Gombosky (co-prime sponsor), Dunn (co-prime sponsor), Fromhold, Armstrong, Wood, Lantz, Pennington and McIntire.*

Brief Summary of Bill

- *Requires governing boards of institutions of higher education to take action on expenditures of services and activities fees within a 90-day period when approval of that expenditure has passed by a two-thirds vote of the student body.*

Hearing Date: *2/21/01*

Staff: *Marsha Reilly (786-7135).*

Background:

Services and activities fees are paid by students for the express purpose of funding student services and programs. The institutional governing boards have the responsibility to ensure that agreements, such as bond covenant agreements and contractual obligations, paid for from student fees are met. Governing boards are responsible for final decisions on the expenditure of services and activities fees.

Guidelines are in place for budgetary recommendations of the fees as well as a dispute resolution process if there is disagreement regarding these recommendations. The services and activities fee committee, consisting of a voting majority of students, recommends program priorities and budget levels to the administrations of institutions of higher education and to the governing boards regarding expenditure of student fees.

The administration reviews the budget recommendations and publishes a written response to the committee. If there is disagreement between the administration and committee an attempt is made to resolve the differences. If the dispute cannot be resolved within 14

days, a dispute resolution committee is convened. If there is no dispute, the recommendations go forward to the governing boards. The governing boards also may take action on any portion of the proposed budget not in dispute.

The dispute resolution committee is made up of two nonvoting advisory members from the administration; three voting members appointed by the governing board, three voting members made up of students from the services and activities fee committee, and one student representing the services and activities fee committee who will chair the dispute resolution committee and be nonvoting. The committee shall ultimately settle by vote any and all disputes. In the event of a tie vote, the chair shall vote to settle the dispute.

Summary of Bill:

This bill amends current statute to require that any action that imposes mandatory, but refundable fees, or authorizes expenditures of services and activities fees must be reviewed by the governing boards within 90 days if the action is approved by a vote of two-thirds of the student body. If the governing board fails to act or complete a review within 90 days, the action is in dispute and subject to resolution by the dispute resolution committee. Also, if the board does not approve an action, the action goes through the dispute process. The decision of the dispute resolution committee is binding.

The bill also amends the 14-day requirement for the dispute resolution process in cases of an intervening summer session, in which case the 14-day requirement would commence on the first day of the fall session.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.