

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6587

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, February 4, 2016

Title: An act relating to services and activities fees at institutions of higher education.

Brief Description: Changing provisions relating to services and activities fees at institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: Senators Liias, Bailey, Frockt, Miloscia and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 2/02/16, 2/04/16 [DPS-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6587 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Bailey, Chair; Baumgartner, Vice Chair; Frockt, Ranking Member; Becker, Carlyle, Liias and Miloscia.

Staff: Clint McCarthy (786-7319)

Background: Under existing statute, governing boards at institutions of higher education may increase the services and activity fee annually. The annual increase is not to exceed the percentage increase of the annual percentage increase in student tuition fees for resident undergraduate students. The increase shall not apply to that portion of services and activities fees that were previously committed to the repayment of bonded debt. The increase is to be judged reasonable and necessary by the services and activities fee committee and the governing board of the institution.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): The requirement that the percentage by which the services and activities fee is increased cannot exceed the percentage increase in student tuition fees for resident undergraduate students is removed. The services and activities fee can be altered (meaning increased or decreased) by the governing boards of each institution of higher education. Language that requires the percentage increase for the services and activities fees to not apply to bonded debt is removed. The new language states that the governing board may alter the existing services and activities fee annually by

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amounts judged reasonable and necessary by the services and activities fee committee and the governing board.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute): Underlying bill is amended to allow for services and activities fees to be altered, which means that fees can be either increased or decreased independent of the rate of resident tuition fee increases.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: PRO: Fees allow students to do fun activities that are important to them. Without the ability to raise fees independent of tuition, rising costs will result in student services having to be cut. It would be preferred to increase or decrease fees in statute, rather than increasing fees. Fees cover a lot of services to students with families, as well as counseling services.

Persons Testifying on Original Bill: PRO: Genesee Adkins, University of Washington; Jeff Beaulac, Student Governmental liaison The Evergreen State College; Cynthia Chin, Associated Students of Central Washington University; Stephanie Shadwick, UW Seattle Student Veteran.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying on Original Bill: No one.