

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6668

As of February 11, 2020

Title: An act relating to services and activities fee transparency.

Brief Description: Increasing services and activities fee transparency at colleges and universities.

Sponsors: Senators Stanford, Nguyen, Hunt and Saldaña.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 2/04/20, 2/06/20 [DP-WM].

Ways & Means: 2/11/20.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Permits the services and activities fee committee to propose and adopt limitations on the maximum percent of service and activity fee waivers which may be granted.
- Requires public service and activity fee budget information to include data about the number and percent of fee waivers awarded.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Randall, Chair; Stanford, Vice Chair; Holy, Ranking Member; Brown and Liias.

Staff: Alicia Kinne-Clawson (786-7407)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Michele Alishahi (786-7433)

Background: Services and activities (S&A) fees are used to fund student activities and programs. Governing boards at the public four-year institutions may increase the S&A fee

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up to 4 percent annually. At community and technical colleges, the annual increase may not exceed the percentage increase of the annual percentage increase in student tuition fees for resident undergraduate students. The percentage increase does not apply to that portion of the S&A fees previously committed to the repayment of bonded debt. Those adjustments may exceed the fiscal growth factor.

Each institution has an S&A fee committee, and students have a majority of the voting membership on the committee. Student groups and campus programs submit proposals to the S&A fee committee, which reviews the proposals and recommends how fees should be allocated. The S&A fee committee recommends a final budget to the institution's governing board, which must give priority consideration to the committee's recommendations.

Summary of Bill: The S&A fee committee may propose and adopt limitations on the maximum percentage of S&A fee revenue that may be waived. Limitations on fee waivers do not apply to mandatory fee waivers required by statute.

All publicly posted S&A fee budget information must contain information about the number and total dollar value of S&A fees which were waived, including mandatory fees waivers provided in statute.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Higher Education & Workforce Development): PRO: This bill was brought by students. Students have a strong voice in how S&A fees are spent but they do not have a voice on waivers. This brings some transparency to that for students. Last year while allocating just over \$10 million, the committee had no idea that over \$1 million was waived. This will make an immediate impact on the ability of students to get the services they need and ensure the committee can manage the fund in the best way possible. In many cases prospective students would not enroll at the university without access to these fee waivers. We are happy to have the committee make recommendations to the board of regents about fee waivers and to post additional information about their use.

Persons Testifying (Higher Education & Workforce Development): PRO: Senator Derek Stanford, Prime Sponsor; Samantha Cruz Mendoza, Director of Legislative Affairs; Associated Students of Washington State University; Chris Mulick, Washington State University.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Higher Education & Workforce Development): No one.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means): PRO: Enrollment has been increasing at WSU and the S&A fee is at an all-time high, and yet funding is at a deficit

because S&A fees are being waived. Last year, while allocating over \$10 million, the S&A fee committee had no idea that over \$1 million was waived. This bill will ensure that decisions on the S&A fee committee are being informed properly. We thank WSU for posting their 5 year S&A fee waiver history on their website. This bill will ensure continued transparency. We are happy to have the S&A fee committee make recommendations to the board of regents about fee waivers and to post S&A fee waiver information on our website.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Matthew Sutherland, Vice-President of Legislative Affairs, Graduate and Professional Student Association at WSU; Chris Mulick, Washington State University; Samantha Cruz Mendoza, Director of Legislative Affairs; Associated Students of Washington State University.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Ways & Means): No one.