

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5329

As of January 18, 2023

Title: An act relating to fees at campuses other than the main campus.

Brief Description: Addressing fees at campuses other than the main campus.

Sponsors: Senators Liias, Holy, Nobles and Wilson, C..

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 1/18/23.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Defines mandatory fees and special fees.
- Establishes limitations on special and mandatory fee authority for students at campuses other than the main campus.
- Requires that mandatory fees be prorated for students enrolled less than full-time.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Alicia Kinne-Clawson (786-7407)

Background: The operating fee and building fee together comprise tuition fees under law. The boards of trustees and regents have operating fee setting authority for resident undergraduate tuition which is capped at a maximum annual increase not to exceed the the average annual percentage growth rate in the median hourly wage for Washington for the previous 14 years as the wage is determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Building fee rates are set in cooperation with the Office of Financial Management as a percent of total tuition fees.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Service and activities fees are capped at a maximum annual increase of 4 percent at the public four-year institutions and tied to the rate of tuition increases at the community and technical colleges.

Technology fees are authorized under law and must be approved by the student government and the boards of trustees or regents.

Other fees authorized under law include course registration fees, administrative fees, and mandatory all student fees including transit, recreation, and renovation fees. These fees are not capped or restricted through statute.

Summary of Bill: Boards of trustees and regents may establish special fees and mandatory fees. Such fees may only be charged to students at campuses other than the main campus if:

- the fee for the service provided is specific to the student or the campus the student is enrolled at; or
- the same or comparable level of service is reasonably available to the student responsible for the fee.

Special fees are defined as fees which are limited to charges for specific goods and services, and are not charged to all students. These may include fees for short courses, self-supporting degree programs, specific course fees, or fines.

Mandatory fees are fees applied to all students. These may include fees such as campus health fees, student activities or facilities, or other fees determined appropriate by the board. Mandatory fees do not include the student technology fee.

Part-time students shall be charged mandatory fees proportionate to the full-time student rates.

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: PRO: This bill is to help start a conversation. It is not to disrupt the work of students who have voted for fees to pay for important investments on their campuses, and students should pay for the services they receive. This bill is consumer protection to ensure that people who live far away from their campuses or are taking just one class receive some consideration for that. This is more complicated than it appears at first sight, and there is confidence that work can be done to find a good solution so students who are trying to afford an education by taking one class at a time have fair

consideration and students can receive the health services and student support that is important as well.

OTHER: There are concerns around this bill as far as covering the debt service on student assessed fees for buildings. There are questions about what impacts this bill would have on current waivers that mention mandatory fees which are only now being defined in statute. There are some fees where proportionality may not be equitable. Students who pay for use of public transportation can use that resource for nonacademic travel, just because they are enrolled part-time does not mean that their access to this benefit is limited.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Marko Liias, Prime Sponsor.

OTHER: Ruben Flores, Council Of Presidents; Arlen Harris, State Board for Community & Technical Colleges.

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