

SUBJECT: Texas Tech student fees

COMMITTEE: Higher Education — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 7 ayes — Rangel, Ogden, Goolsby, Harris, Moreno, Reyna, Rodriguez
0 nays
1 absent — Gallego, Kamel

WITNESSES: For — Eric Sanchez; Jake West
Against — None

BACKGROUND: The board of regents of Texas Tech University may levy a fee of up to \$20 per student per semester and \$10 per student per summer session to operate, maintain and improve the University Center. The board may increase student union fees only if a majority of students voting in a referendum approve.

DIGEST: HB 1296 would authorize the Texas Tech University board of regents to levy student union fees of up to \$50 per student per semester and \$25 per student per summer session. An annual increase of more than 10 percent in a current fee would have to be approved by a majority vote of the students or a majority vote of the student government. The bill would take immediate effect if approved by two thirds of the membership of each house and apply beginning with fees due for the fall 1995 semester.

SUPPORTERS SAY: HB 1510 would raise much needed funds for maintenance and improvements to the Texas Tech University Center. The University Center is used by the students as a study area and includes a movie theater, cafeteria and ballroom. The fee cap was set in 1981 and is now too low to raise the funds needed to make necessary improvements that cannot be covered by the current student fee.

The bill would allow the university to raise fees to a level on par with the state's other universities. The bill would also allow students to decide to increase their fees through either their student government or through a

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student referendum, with the flexibility to make small adjustments yearly of no more than 10 percent.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

Students should have a voice in deciding whether they must pay any higher fee for facilities such as a student union. Current law requires a student vote for all student fee increases. Under HB 1510, fees could be increased by 10 percent a year without a student vote, and increases above 10 percent could be approved by student government, without holding a student referendum.

NOTES:

The companion bill, SB 1257 by Montford, is pending in the Senate Finance Committee.

The Senate amendments to HB 1792 by Junell, increasing state university tuition and fees, added a provision identical to HB 1510.

SB 815 by Cain, which passed the Senate 31-0 on May 2, would increase the cap on the recreational sports fee at Texas Tech from \$35 to \$50 during the spring or fall semester and from \$17.50 to \$25 for summer sessions.