

SUBJECT: Limiting the use of student fees for intercollegiate athletics

COMMITTEE: Higher Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 6 ayes — Rangel, Ogden, Gallego, Kamel, Reyna, Rodriguez

0 nays

1 present, not voting — Harris

2 absent — Goolsby, Moreno

WITNESSES: For — Chuck Hempstead

Against — None

DIGEST: CSHB 2812 would limit the authority of boards of institutions of higher education to use student fee revenue to pay for intercollegiate athletics. A board would be prohibited from using fee revenue for athletics unless students were made aware of how the fee would be used and, if a fee required approval in a student election, the amount to be used for intercollegiate athletics would have to be listed on the ballot. The total amount of student fees used on intercollegiate athletics would be limited to \$75 per long semester and \$25 per summer session.

The bill would take effect September 1, 1995, and apply to fees charged for the spring semester of 1996.

SUPPORTERS SAY: Student fees, authorized by the state and making up an ever-increasing share of a student's cost of higher education, should not be diverted into the support intercollegiate athletics, especially without students being aware of how their fees are being used. A report by the State Auditor's Office found many universities' athletic program funds had large deficits and that student fees were being used to support athletic program funds. CSHB 2812 would limit this questionable practice in two ways: putting a dollar limit on the amount of fees that could be spent on athletics and making sure that whenever fee revenue is used for athletics, students are aware of how their money is being used by boards of regents.

OPPONENTS
SAY: No apparent opposition.

NOTES: The committee substitute added the requirement for boards to inform students of fees supporting intercollegiate athletic programs, increased the cap on fees used for athletics from \$50 to \$75 for a long semester, and expanded the provision about student elections to apply to all fee elections, not just those authorizing initial imposition of a fee.