

SUBJECT: Allowing tuition and fee waivers for fully funded courses

COMMITTEE: Higher Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 5 ayes — Rangel, Goolsby, Moreno, Reyna, Rodriguez
0 nays
4 absent — Ogden, Gallego, Harris, Kamel

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, February 6 — 29-0

WITNESSES: For — Robert Beck Clark, Texas A&M University.
Against — None

DIGEST: CSSB 221 would amend Education Code Chapter 54 to allow the board of regents of a higher education institution to waive tuition and fees for students enrolled in courses fully funded by federal or other sources. The bill would take immediate effect if approved by two-thirds of the membership of each house.

SUPPORTERS SAY: Current law has been interpreted as requiring state colleges and universities to charge tuition and fees, even for those courses that are fully funded by federal or private sources. In some cases this double payment by students could threaten the funding source for the course.

CSSB 221 would simply allow the governing boards of higher education institutions to decide for themselves whether to grant tuition waivers on a course-by-course basis when courses are fully paid by federal grants and private sources. Eliminating tuition and fees would create an incentive for students to attend these courses.

OPPONENTS SAY: No apparent opposition

NOTES: The Senate-passed version would only allow higher education institutions to waive tuition and fees for teachers attending a federally funded teacher enhancement program; the committee substitute would grant waiver authority for all courses fully funded by federal or other courses.