

SUBJECT: Allowing colleges to permit neighboring students to pay resident tuition

COMMITTEE: Higher Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 7 ayes — Rangel, Solis, Bailey, Cuellar, Dunnam, Rabuck, E. Reyna
0 nays
2 absent — Kamel, Rodriguez

WITNESSES: For — John Pickleman, Texas Association of Community Colleges
Against — None

BACKGROUND : Under section 130 of the Education Code, public junior colleges must collect non-resident tuition and fees from each student who does not reside in the area subject to property taxation by the junior college district in order to receive their proportionate share of state appropriations.

DIGEST: CSHB 1548 would allow the governing body of a junior college to waive some or all of the nonresident tuition and fees required of students from adjoining college districts. It would also allow resident rates to be paid by students whose school districts, under order of the Higher Education Coordinating Board, are not allowed to create their own college district.

CSHB 1548 would take immediate effect if finally approved by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house and would apply to tuition and fees charged beginning with the 1997 fall semester.

SUPPORTERS SAY: CSHB 1548 would increase access to higher education by allowing more students to take advantage of public junior colleges in or near their neighborhoods. When two college districts split a geographical area, students are charged resident tuition and fees at the college to which their area pays property taxes. Although a college in an adjoining district may be much closer to students' residences than the college where they are authorized to pay resident tuition, they can only attend the closer school by paying the higher, nonresident tuition rate. CSHB 1548 would help

eliminate this problem allowing colleges to permit students to pay resident tuition and fees if they reside in a district contiguous to their own.

Students might also wish to attend another district's junior college because it offers special or technical programs not offered in their district. This would save money for both the students and the state, as it would allow colleges near each other to complement each other's curriculum and cut down on the need for duplicative courses.

CSHB 1548 would also allow the payment of resident tuition and fees by students residing in districts that are not allowed to create their own junior college, often because they are low wealth districts. These students, under current law, are effectively prevented from paying resident tuition and fees anywhere in the state. As students from low wealth districts are themselves likely to have greater financial need, this change would bring relief to a population that needs it.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

No apparent opposition.

NOTES:

The committee substitute deleted a provision that would have allowed the governing board of a junior college to charge registration fees in addition to tuition for non-resident students.