

SUBJECT: Tuition and fee installment payments for summer-session students

COMMITTEE: Higher Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 8 ayes — Rangel, F. Brown, Farabee, J. Jones, Morrison, E. Reyna, Uher, West  
0 nays  
1 absent — Goolsby

WITNESSES: For — *Registered but not testify*: Hilary Lefko and Seth Oldmixon, University of Texas at Austin  
Against — None  
On — Dr. Bill Segura, Texas State Technical College

BACKGROUND: Education Code, sec. 54.007 requires public higher education institutions to give their students two options to pay tuition and fees during the fall and spring semesters: (1) pay the full amount before the start of the semester or (2) pay half before the semester begins, one-quarter before the start of the sixth class week, and the final one-quarter before the 11th class week.

DIGEST: CSHB 1212 would amend the Education Code to require higher education institutions to allow summer-session students to pay tuition and fees in installments. A student enrolled for a 12-week summer term could pay half at the beginning of the term, one-quarter before the beginning of the fifth week, and one-quarter before the beginning of the ninth week. A student enrolled for a 16-week summer term could pay by the same installment schedule as allowed in spring and fall semesters. The institution's governing board could impose incidental fees for students using these payment alternatives.

This bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2001. The changes would apply only to tuition and fees

charged for a semester or summer session beginning on or after the effective date.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

CSHB 1212 would help economically disadvantaged students by allowing them to complete their studies, graduate, and enter the workforce more quickly than otherwise possible. Some public higher education institutions in the state offer full-length semesters during the summer to expedite their students' graduation. However, under current law, students may pay their tuition and fees in installments only during fall and spring semesters. As a result, many students have to skip a summer semester because they cannot afford to pay all their tuition and fees before the beginning of the semester.

Students' inability to attend summer school not only extends their course of study but also compounds the economic burden on the students and their families in terms of increased expenses and foregone work-related income. Also, inability to attend summer school can result in lower retention and graduation rates, as students forced to take the summer off may not return in the fall to continue their studies.

CSHB 1212 also would benefit higher education institutions and the state by encouraging better use of higher education facilities during the summer. Many institutions are facing record enrollment, and projections indicate that increases in enrollment will continue, particularly for community and technical colleges. CSHB 1212 would help ease enrollment pressures by encouraging interested students to take summer courses and by allowing them to graduate earlier than they would otherwise.

The bill would be limited to institutions that offer 12- or 16-week summer sessions. It would not impose a significant burden on these institutions, as it merely would require them to extend to the summer session the tuition policies already in place for the fall and spring semesters.

**OPPONENTS  
SAY:**

CSHB 1212 could impose an administrative burden on certain higher education institutions by requiring them to allow their students to pay tuition and fees for 12- and 16-week summer terms in installments. Any such change should be permissive rather than mandatory and should allow institutions to decide their own payment schedules for summer tuition and fees.

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NOTES:

The original version of HB 1212 specified that the changes made by the bill would apply beginning with tuition and fees charged for the 2001 fall semester.