

Higher Education Committee

HB 1833

Brief Description: *Setting tuition fees at the state's institutions of higher education.*

Sponsors: *Representatives G. Chandler, Lantz, Campbell, Schoesler, Lambert, Pennington, Grant, Haigh, Delvin, Boldt, Hankins, Simpson, Ogden, Dunn and Mulliken.*

Brief Summary of Bill

- *Prohibits the governing boards of the public four-year to set or adjust tuition fees, except during summer term.*

Hearing Date: *2/21/01*

Staff: *Marsha Reilly (786-7135).*

Background:

From 1978 until 1995, the Legislature established tuition policy as a percentage of the instructional costs at public colleges and universities. In 1995, the Legislature removed the direct link to cost of instruction and set forth in statute dollar amounts for tuition with no policy attached. The 1996 Legislature increased the statutory amounts for nonresident undergraduate tuition at the two research institutions.

The 1997 Legislature again set tuition amounts in statute without a policy. Increases in tuition approximated 4 percent each year for most categories of students. Exceptions were allowed for increases beyond 4 percent for three categories of students at the University of Washington: 8.3 percent for nonresident undergraduates, 7.3 percent for resident law students, and 6.7 percent for nonresident law students.

Still no policy in 1999. The Legislature granted through a budget proviso limited tuition setting authority, with caps, to the governing boards for higher education institutions. In the first year of the biennium, tuition could be raised up to 4.6 percent, and in the second year it could be raised up to 3.6 percent. Institutions also could vary the increases among

categories of students.

In the current Legislature, the Governor has proposed a policy that would give tuition setting authority to the governing boards of higher education institutions and the state board for community and technical colleges. Increases are allowed in excess of the fiscal growth factor but with limits of no more than 10 percent per year and no more than 40 percentage points over any consecutive six-year period for resident undergraduate students. For all other categories of students, the governing boards may increase operating fees above the fiscal growth factor with no limitations or caps. Operating fees also may vary by program, time-of-day, day-of-the-week, campus, degree, delivery method, or other criteria.

Summary of Bill:

The governing boards of the public four-year institutions of higher education may not set or adjust tuition fees for full-time students, except during summer term.

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: *Not Requested.*

Effective Date: *Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.*