
State Government & Tribal Affairs
Committee

HB 1466

Brief Description: Regarding student fees, charges, and assessments.

Sponsors: Representatives Williams, Anderson, White, Hunt, Wallace, Sells, Angel, Moeller, Uptegrove, Priest, Armstrong, Appleton, Carlyle and Santos.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Exempts the creation or increase of services and activities fees from the fee restrictions of Initiative 960 and from the disclosure requirements for use of public funds for lobbying.
- Allows the use of services and activities fees for lobbying purposes.

Hearing Date: 2/3/09

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135)

Background:

Student Services and Activities Fees

In addition to tuition fees, students at institutions of higher education are charged services and activities fees. These fees are dedicated to fund student activities and programs as well as for repaying bonds and other indebtedness for facilities such as dormitories, hospitals, dining halls, parking facilities, and student, faculty and employee housing. Students have a strong voice in recommending budgets for services and activities fees through the services and activities fee committee (committee), and the governing boards of the institutions must adhere to the principle that the committee's desires be given priority consideration.

Fee Restrictions

In 2007 Initiative 960 modified fee increase restrictions to prohibit state agencies from imposing new fees or increasing fees by any amount without prior legislative approval. In addition, bills

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that authorize fee increases or new fees are subject to Initiative 960s publicity and projection provisions, under which the Office of Financial Management must provide public notice of the legislation, along with 10-year projections of the estimated cost to taxpayers.

Use of Public Funds for Lobbying

Generally, the use of public funds for lobbying is prohibited. This does not preclude an agency officer or employee from communicating with the Legislature for requests for legislative action or appropriations necessary for the business of the agency, or providing information or communicating on matters pertaining to the agency. Agencies that expend public funds for these restricted lobbying purposes are required to file quarterly statements with the Public Disclosure Commission that identifies the persons who lobbied, the general nature of the lobbying, and the proportionate amount of time and money spent on lobbying.

Summary of Bill:

The creation or increase of a fee presented to the student body and passed by a majority vote of the students voting is not subject to the fee increase restrictions of Initiative 960, and use of those fees is not subject to the statute governing the use of public funds for lobbying. Services and activities fees may be used for lobbying by a student government association and may also be used to support a statewide or national student organization that engages in lobbying.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.