

Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Carrier – House: Rep. Dembrow
Carrier – Senate: Sen. Monroe

Revenue: No revenue impact

Fiscal: Fiscal statement issued

Action: Do Pass the A-Engrossed Measure

Vote: 23 – 0 – 2

Yeas: Beyer, Buckley, Cowan, Garrard, Komp, McLane, Nathanson, Nolan, Read, Richardson,
G. Smith, Thatcher, Whisnant

Nays:

Exc: Freeman

Senate

Yeas: Bates, Devlin, Edwards, Girod, Johnson, Monroe, Nelson, Thomsen, Verger, Whitsett

Nays:

Exc: Winters

Prepared By: John Terpening, Legislative Fiscal Office

Meeting Date: February 27, 2012

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: The measure directs the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to convene a workgroup to examine and recommend adoption of strategies for reducing higher education textbook costs. The workgroup must hold at least three public meetings during the process. The HECC is to forward the workgroup recommendations to the Legislative Assembly by November 1, 2012. The recommendations must identify strategies that require rule adoption by the State Board of Higher Education and the State Board of Education and require additional legislation. The measure is effective July 2, 2012 and is repealed at the convening of the 2013 Legislative Assembly.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Fiscal impact of the measure

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: In recent years, textbook prices have increased significantly, resulting in increased costs to students. A 2005 study from the Public Interest Research Group found that textbook prices increased at four times the rate of inflation, and revealed that students pay an average of \$900 per year on textbooks. A similar study conducted in 2007 by the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance estimated that students spend between \$700 and \$1,000 each year on textbooks. Efforts to reduce the cost of textbooks include the Federal Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008, which requires publishers to “unbundle” textbooks and supplemental materials, and disclose pricing information. By reducing the cost of textbooks, and increasing access to cost-saving strategies, supporters assert that students will experience an increase in access to higher education and a reduction in incurred debt.