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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE BILL

No. 1686 Session of  
2023

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INTRODUCED BY O'MARA, HANBIDGE, SANCHEZ, MADDEN, HOHENSTEIN,  
ISAACSON, SCHLOSSBERG, HARKINS, FLEMING, CIRESI, KIM,  
D. WILLIAMS, SHUSTERMAN, KINSEY, DELLOSO, ROZZI, HOWARD,  
T. DAVIS, WARREN, MERSKI AND KEEFER, SEPTEMBER 19, 2023

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, SEPTEMBER 19, 2023

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AN ACT

1 Requiring disclosure of mandatory fees by institutions of higher  
2 education.

3 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
4 hereby enacts as follows:

5 Section 1. Short title.

6 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Know What You  
7 Pay For - The Student Fee Transparency Act.

8 Section 2. Definitions.

9 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall  
10 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the  
11 context clearly indicates otherwise:

12 "Department." The Department of Education of the  
13 Commonwealth.

14 "Institution of higher education." Any of the following:

15 (1) A community college operating under Article XIX-A of  
16 the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the  
17 Public School Code of 1949.

1           (2) A university within the State System of Higher  
2 Education.

3           (3) The Pennsylvania State University.

4           (4) The University of Pittsburgh.

5           (5) Temple University.

6           (6) Lincoln University.

7           (7) The Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology.

8           (8) Any other institution that is designated as "State-  
9 related" by the Commonwealth.

10          (9) An accredited private or independent college or  
11 university.

12          (10) A private licensed school as defined in the act of  
13 December 15, 1986 (P.L.1585, No.174), known as the Private  
14 Licensed Schools Act.

15 "Mandatory fee." Any of the following:

16          (1) Mandatory enrollment fee.

17          (2) Mandatory incidental fee.

18          (3) Mandatory student-initiated fee.

19          (4) Any other fee a student must pay as a condition of  
20 attending an institution of higher education that is not  
21 directly applied to a student's tuition, room or board fees.

22 "Online student portal." A secured internal Internet service  
23 administered by an institution of higher education on which a  
24 student of the institution of higher education can access  
25 personal academic, financial and other information related to  
26 attending the institution of higher education.

27 Section 3. Requirements.

28 An institution of higher education shall prominently display  
29 a description of every mandatory fee charged by the institution  
30 of higher education and shall publish the fee description on

1 each institution of higher education's publicly accessible  
2 Internet website and online student portal prior to the term for  
3 which the mandatory fee will be charged and included in any  
4 tuition bill. The amount of the mandatory fee must be  
5 accompanied by a description of:

- 6 (1) The general purpose of the mandatory fee.
- 7 (2) How the mandatory fee will be allocated and used.
- 8 (3) How the mandatory fee will be collected, the  
9 duration of time for which the fee will be assessed and the  
10 beginning and end dates for collecting the mandatory fee.

11 Section 4. Reporting fees.

12 Beginning November 15, 2023, and by November 15 of each year  
13 thereafter, each institution of higher education shall report to  
14 the department on the institution of higher education's  
15 collection of mandatory fees during the prior academic year. The  
16 report shall include:

- 17 (1) The total amount of mandatory fees collected.
- 18 (2) The amount of mandatory fees allocated to each use  
19 or recipient.

20 Section 5. Reporting to the department.

21 Beginning on June 30, 2023, and by June 30 of each year  
22 thereafter, each institution of higher education shall report to  
23 the department the measures taken to display the information  
24 required under this act.

25 Section 6. Effective date.

26 This act shall take effect immediately.