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**S.R. 2017-2018**

**Date of First Reading:**

**A Resolution to be entitled – “The Budget Accountability Resolution”, relating to the demand that the Associated Student Government of Texas State is granted access to the discussions being held about the allocation of student fees via an ability to amend and approve specific aspects of the budget annually**

**WHEREAS:** The cost of attending university has risen tremendously over the past several years, and continues to increase at faster rates than wages or per capita purchasing power; and

**WHEREAS:** Much of this is a result of increases in tuition and cost of living. However, the cost of attending college can also be attributed to several other factors. One such expense that contributes to this growth in cost is that incurred due to additional student fees levied independently of tuition; and

**WHEREAS:** These fees fund a number of important programs that are beneficial to the campus community. However, with the monetary costs these impose on the students, the opportunity costs associated with implementing specific programs, and the fact that many students struggle to afford college, difficult decisions must often be made about how to distribute these funds; and

**WHEREAS:** Since these fees are paid by students, and since the programs they fund are supposed to benefit students, it is reasonable and prudent for students to have a say in decisions about how they are used; and

**WHEREAS:** Under Texas State University’s current system the student body has little to no input on how their money is being spent, with the administrators excerising substantial control over the allocation of funds collected from student feest; and

**WHEREAS:** This arrangement is one that removes the agency of students in determining how and where to spend their money. While tuition is an expense that is freely consented to by one’s decision to attend the university, student fees are separate from tuition and thereby constitute a distinct transaction. Forcing students to accept expenses in addition to the tuition without giving them the ability to choose the extent and nature of those additional expenses constitutes a coercive policy nonconsensual extraction of funds from the student body. Therefore, for fees in addition to tuition to be reasonably considered as consensual in the same way that tuition is when students choose to attend the school, students ought to have a recognized right to representation in decisions about how to allocate these funds; and

**WHEREAS:** Texas education code Title III, Subtitle A, Chapter 54 already requires that increases in fees must be approved by students by majority vote in an election for that purpose; and

**WHEREAS:** With student government being the official voice of the student body in policy matters, student government should be able to influence these decisions in order to give students a seat at the table in decisions about how their money is used; therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED:** Texas State University student government shall be granted powers of amendments and approval over the allocation of money collected from student fees.. The student government will exercise advisory power over whether to approve, reject, or amend the budget by a simple majority. Furthermore, the student government will have the power to reject a budget outright through a 2/3rds supermajority in both the House and the Senate. Upon rejection of a budget by either standard, student government shall have a maximum of 30 days to propose a new budget, or to make necessary amendments to an existing budget. Failure to meet these deadlines shall result in that fiscal year’s budget being enacted; and

**BE IT RESOLVED:** That administration should submit budgets two semesters in advance to allow adequate time for student government to review, vote, and provide feedback without obstructing the operations of the university; and

**BE IT RESOLVED:** Student government shall be granted access to invoices, records, and other documentation necessary for the oversight of the use of student fees; and

**BE IT RESOLVED:** That the Finance Commission shall oversee the implementation of this resolution, and shall be tasked with facilitating communication between administration and student government on budgetary matters and writing/reviewing legislation and amendments which are deemed necessary to carry out this role. The Finance Commission shall also work with the administration on budgetary matters where appropriate per relevant university policy and student government statute, and shall conduct necessary preliminary reviews and evaluations of material before it is finalized and presented for a vote; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** This legislation be forwarded to the Student Body President for further action.