

HB 927 -- STUDENT FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

SPONSOR: Deaton

This bill defines "benefit," "exercise of religion," "public institution of higher learning" and "substantially burden."

The bill prohibits an institution of higher learning from taking any action or enforcing any policy that denies a religious student association any benefit available to other student organizations or from discriminating against a religious student organization with respect to the benefit based on any of the religious requirements or leadership standards placed on the organization.

This bill prohibits any institution of higher learning from substantially burdening a student's exercise of religion unless the institution can demonstrate that application of the burden is in furtherance of a compelling interest of the institution and is the least restrictive means for doing so.

The bill further provides protections for political and ideological student organizations, and prohibits discrimination based on an organization's belief, conduct, or mission.

Any student or religious, political, or ideological student association that has been aggrieved as a result of a violation of these provisions may assert the violation as a claim or defense in a judicial or administrative proceeding against the public institution of higher learning and obtain appropriate relief, including damages.