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SBBA Applauds Vote Today in Louisiana House Education Committee

Committee Votes to Support HB 194, Giving Tuition Authority to Higher Education Management Boards

The Louisiana House Education Committee has taken the first step toward providing more autonomy and flexibility for Louisiana's higher education institutions. In a 13 to 4 vote, the committee voted today in favor of House Bill 194, sponsored by Walt Leger (D-New Orleans), which would transfer tuition authority from the legislature and to the higher education management boards. This legislation has strong support from the Board of Regents, the four higher education management boards, university presidents, and business organizations around the state including the SBBA.

Louisiana is one of only three states where tuition authority resides in the legislature and is the only state that requires a 2/3 vote of the legislature to raise tuition. The Board of Regents has aggressively sought more freedom to adjust tuition in recent years as state funding for higher education has been reduced by nearly \$650 million since 2008.

"During our higher education strategy retreat this spring, our local chancellors made it clear they needed the freedom to become more market-driven," said Patrick Harrison, Chair of the SBBA. "If the state is not going to adequately fund higher education, we need to take the shackles off of our chancellors and give them the ability to do what they must to keep their institutions strong and their doors open."

In addition to shifting tuition authority, the bill would allow institutions to charge higher tuition for more expensive majors and impose tuition and fees on a per-credit-hour basis. Currently students do not pay for additional hours above 12 hours per semester.

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The mission of the Shreveport-Bossier Business Alliance for Higher Education (SBBA) is to promote economic development by aligning the offerings of higher education with the needs of the business community. SBBA members include the Greater Shreveport Chamber of Commerce, the Bossier Chamber of Commerce, the Shreveport-Bossier African American Chamber of Commerce, the Manufacturing Manager's Council of NWLA, the Biomedical Research Foundation of NWLA, the North Louisiana Economic Partnership, and the Committee of One Hundred.