

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5442

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, February 21, 2007

Title: An act relating to tuition waivers for eligible veteran or national guard medal recipients.

Brief Description: Providing for tuition waivers for eligible veteran or national guard medal recipients.

Sponsors: Senators Hobbs, Shin, Hewitt, Zarelli, Swecker, Roach, Clements, Kauffman, Kilmer, Pridemore, Hatfield, Keiser, Parlette, Haugen, McAuliffe, Delvin, Benton, Rasmussen and Holmquist.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 2/21/07 [DPS-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5442 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Shin, Chair; Kilmer, Vice Chair; Delvin, Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Schoesler and Sheldon.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: Currently, higher education institutions are permitted to reduce all or a portion of tuition for certain types of students and for various purposes, including a child and/or the surviving spouse of an eligible military veteran or National Guard member who lost his or her life or became totally disabled, is a prisoner of war, or became missing in action, while engaged in active federal military or naval service. Eligible veteran or National Guard members are those that are Washington domiciliaries.

Summary of Bill: Washington public institutions of higher education must waive all tuition and fees for eligible medal recipients; children and spouses of eligible veterans or National Guard members who become totally disabled while on active duty or are determined to be a prisoner of war or missing in action; and children and spouses of eligible veterans or National Guard members who lost their life while on active duty. Spouses are not eligible for the waiver if they remarry. An "eligible medal recipient" is defined as a Washington domiciliary who is on active duty or honorably discharged, who has resided in the state for at least one year, and who has been awarded the Afghanistan campaign medal, Iraq campaign medal, or the global war on terror expeditionary medal.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY RECOMMENDED SUBSTITUTE AS PASSED COMMITTEE (Higher Education): The waiver is permissive rather than mandatory.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The transition to civilian life will be easier if these waivers are available. Many of these returning soldiers are supporting young families as well as trying to get an education. This is a small showing of gratitude.

OTHER: There are many categories of deserving students competing for tuition waivers. Mandatory tuition waivers decrease the institutions flexibility to provide students with the assistance they need.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Hobbs, prime sponsor; Mike Partridge, Veteran's Legislative Coalition; Skip Dreps, Northwest Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America.

OTHER: Randy Hodgins, University of Washington; Terry Teale, Council of Presidents; Sherry Bake, citizen.