

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5280

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, January 24, 2007

Title: An act relating to military scholarships.

Brief Description: Providing postsecondary education grants for national guard and military families.

Sponsors: Senators Jacobsen, Rasmussen, Shin, Kilmer and Honeyford.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 1/22/07, 1/24/07 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5280 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: The state of Washington hosts several major military bases, and significant installations of all branches of the military. Pierce County is the home of McChord Air Force Base and Ft. Lewis Army Base. Kitsap County is home to the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, the Bangor Submarine Base, and the Keyport Undersea Warfare Research Station. Island County is the location of Whidbey Naval Air Station, and Snohomish County hosts the Everett Navy Base. Spokane County is the location of Fairchild Air Force Base. Yakima County is home to a training facility that is organizationally part of Ft. Lewis. In addition to these major facilities, there are more than 100 smaller facilities including hospitals, camps, depots, signal stations, recruiting offices, and other miscellaneous facilities. There are over 84,000 military and civilian personnel working on these bases. The Washington National Guard is in 36 Washington host cities.

Summary of Bill: The Dollars for Military Scholars Program (DMSP) is created. State money used to provide the grants must be matched by private contributions. The grant program is administered by a non-profit organization. The program administrator partners with Scholarship America for processing and support, is responsible for advertising the availability of the awards, and provides annual audited financial statements to the Legislature. The DMSP is a need-based program that awards between \$1,000 and \$5,000 to eligible persons.

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.

Applicants must be veterans who are Washington citizens or stationed in Washington on active duty in the military or national guard, or the spouse or dependent of the veteran. They must be applying for admission to an institution of higher education or a vocational or technical school degree or certification program. Applicants working toward studies in mathematics, science, engineering, or non-English languages are favored.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY RECOMMENDED SUBSTITUTE AS PASSED COMMITTEE (Higher Education): The applicants must be Washington residents rather than Washington citizens. The appropriations and the state matching funds provisions are eliminated.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 15, 2007.

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: These programs are effective because they involve local communities. Soldiers and their families are looking for ways to obtain and apply their education so they can keep contributing to society. This is a program that could be replicated in other states. There is a proven interest and need for a program such as this. The veterans and families deserve our support regardless of our personal views on the war in Iraq.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Jacobsen, prime sponsor; Jodi Bruns, Scholarship America; Terry Tilton, Washington State Building and Construction Trades Council; Rick Millerrick, NW Dollars for Scholars.