

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5215

As Passed House:

April 8, 1999

Title: An act relating to veterans' exemptions from higher education tuition and fees.

Brief Description: Extending veterans' exemptions from higher education tuition.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Senators Bauer, Oke, Kohl-Welles, Roach, Winsley, T. Sheldon and Rasmussen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 3/23/99, 3/30/99 [DP];

Appropriations: 4/5/99 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/8/99, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Eliminates the June 30, 1999, expiration date for the programs allowing the institutions of higher education to exempt Vietnam veterans and Persian Gulf veterans from tuition increases.
- Encourages technical colleges to exempt veterans from tuition increases.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Carlson, Republican Co-Chair; Kenney, Democratic Co-Chair; Lantz, Democratic Vice Chair; Radcliff, Republican Vice Chair; Dunn; Edmonds; Esser and Gombosky.

Staff: Sherie Story (786-7120).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 32 members: Representatives Huff, Republican Co-Chair; H. Sommers, Democratic Co-Chair; Alexander, Republican Vice Chair; Doumit, Democratic Vice Chair; D. Schmidt, Republican Vice Chair; Barlean; Benson; Boldt; Carlson; Clements; Cody; Crouse; Gombosky; Grant; Kagi; Keiser; Kenney; Kessler; Lambert; Linville; Lisk; Mastin; McIntire; McMorris; Mulliken; Parlette; Regala; Rockefeller; Ruderman; Sullivan; Tokuda and Wensman.

Staff: Mary Alice Grobins (786-7118).

Background:

The governing boards of the state's public higher education institutions may exempt veterans of the Vietnam conflict, who served in Southeast Asia, from all or a portion of increases in student tuition and fees that occur after October 1, 1977. To qualify for the exemption, the veteran must be a resident student and must have served in Southeast Asia during the time period between August 5, 1964, and May 7, 1975. Currently, the expiration date for this tuition exemption is June 30, 1999.

The governing boards of the state's public higher education institutions may exempt veterans of the Persian Gulf combat zone from all or a portion of increases in tuition and fees that occur after the 1990-91 academic year. To qualify for the exemption, the veteran must have qualified as a resident student if enrolled as a student on August 1, 1990. The veteran also must have served on active duty in the armed forces of the United States during any portion of 1991 in the Persian Gulf combat zone. Currently, the expiration date for this tuition exemption is June 30, 1999.

Summary of Bill:

The June 30, 1999, expiration dates are eliminated for the programs allowing institutions to exempt Vietnam veterans and Persian Gulf veterans from tuition increases.

The technical colleges are encouraged to exempt veterans from tuition increases.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: (Higher Education) We should do whatever we can to honor those who have served our country in the armed forces, especially in combat. The Veterans' Legislative Coalition strongly supports SB 5215 as a way to assist veterans in furthering their education. It has been a priority for the coalition. Not having time lines is a good idea because sometimes it has taken the "homeless" and other veterans a while to get their act together.

(Appropriations) None.

Testimony Against: (Higher Education) None.

(Appropriations) None.

Testified: (Higher Education) Dennis L. Primoli, Patrick McDonald, and Tony Woods, Veterans' Legislative Coalition; and Joseph K. Johnston, Northwest Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America.

(Appropriations) None.