

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5162

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As Passed Senate, March 3, 1995

**Title:** An act relating to tuition exemptions for veterans.

**Brief Description:** Changing the Vietnam veterans' tuition exemption.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Bauer, Oke, Snyder, Hargrove, Haugen, Kohl, C. Anderson and Winsley).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Higher Education: 1/26/95, 2/2/95 [DPS].  
Passed Senate, 3/3/95, 47-0.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5162 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Bauer, Chair; Kohl, Vice Chair; A. Anderson, Prince, Sheldon, West and Wood.

**Staff:** Jean Six (786-7423)

**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 any increase in student tuition and fees. The veteran shall not be required to pay more than the total amount of tuition and fees paid by veterans of the Vietnam conflict on October 1, 1977. To qualify for the exemption, the veteran must have served in Southeast Asia during the time period between August 5, 1964 and May 7, 1975. Additionally, the veteran must be a resident of Washington and must have enrolled in a state institution on or before May 7, 1990.

The 1994 Legislature extended the sunset date for this exemption to June 30, 1997. The 1994 Legislature also required that veterans receiving the exemption must: (1) be enrolled for seven or more quarter credits per academic term or their equivalent; (2) have an adjusted gross family income not exceeding the Washington State's median family income; and (3) have exhausted all entitlement for federal vocational or educational benefits conferred by virtue of their military service.

**Summary of Bill:** Public baccalaureate institutions and community colleges may exempt eligible Vietnam veterans from all or a portion of tuition and fee increases adopted after October 1, 1977. In order to receive the waiver, veterans must meet these conditions: (1) be a veteran who served on active duty in the military or naval forces of the United States anytime between August 5, 1964 to May 7, 1975; (2) have served in the Southeast Asia theater of operations; (3) have been enrolled in a public college or university before May 7, 1990; and (4) be a resident student at the time of enrollment.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 13, 1995.

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

**Testimony For:** Veterans are entitled to educational benefits. The requirements added by last year's legislation have caused a significant drop in veterans' enrollment. The affected veterans should be either reimbursed, grandfathered in, or given an extension of the program.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Beau Bergeron, Director, Veterans' Affairs; Roy Burns, Chuck Lawrence, and Randy Castro, Veterans' Legislative Coalition; Ed Madden, student, UW Tacoma.

**House Amendment(s):** An intent section is adopted. The requirement that a veteran be enrolled by May 7, 1990 is removed. The waiver of tuition is permissive and variable. The expiration date is extended to June 30, 1999.