

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1047

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, March 24, 1997

Title: An act relating to tuition waivers.

Brief Description: Changing tuition waivers for members of the Washington national guard and employees of institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: House Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Carlson, Radcliff, Dunn and O'Brien).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 3/20/97, 3/24/97 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Wood, Chair; Bauer, Kohl, Patterson, Prince and West.

Staff: Jennifer Hanlon (786-7784)

Background: The governing boards of Washington public institutions of higher education may waive all or a portion of tuition and fees for particular categories of students. The waivers are provided on a space-available basis. Until 1996, these space-available waivers were limited to permanent full-time institutional employees, senior citizens and certain permanent full-time classified state employees. In addition, community colleges could waive tuition for eligible unemployed and underemployed persons. Students receiving these waivers do not count in official enrollment reports, and the institutions do not receive any state funding for them. Institutions were required to charge a fee of \$5 or more to cover the costs associated with enrolling these students.

In the 1996 legislative session, the Legislature enacted two bills that expanded the types of persons eligible to receive space-available waivers.

The law that permitted institutions to waive tuition and fees for permanent full-time classified state employees was revised to include a number of additional state employees. These included permanent employees who are employed half-time or more: (1) in classified service under state civil service law; (2) through the Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act; and (3) in technical colleges as classified employees and exempt paraprofessionals. Nonacademic employees and members of the faculties or instructional staffs employed half-time or more at public colleges and universities were also included. People enrolled under this law must pay a registration fee of \$5 or more.

The second bill amended a separate statute. The law that permitted higher education institutions to waive tuition and fees for the institutions' own permanent full-time employees

was amended to include members of the Washington National Guard. People enrolled under this law are required to pay a registration fee that fully covers the cost of enrollment.

During the summer of 1996, the Office of the Attorney General advised the institutions that these two statutes conflict. The result of current law is that an institution may waive tuition and fees for all other state employees who are employed half-time or more, but may only waive tuition and fees for its own employees if they are employed full-time.

Summary of Bill: The statute in the original bill is repealed and some of the persons who are eligible to participate in space-available waiver programs are consolidated into another statute. The types of institutional employees who may receive tuition waivers are clarified. They include persons employed half-time or more in the employee classifications listed in the legislation. When granting waivers, institutions are not permitted to discriminate between full-time and part-time employees, but may grant waivers to their own employees before considering waivers for other eligible persons. If institutions participate in this waiver program, they must allow eligible state employees and members of the National Guard to be included in the eligibility pool.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This legislation corrects a technical problem in the statutes. All interested parties have worked together to come to a mutual solution. The legislation also prevents any discrimination of part-time faculty.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Representative Don Carlson, prime sponsor; Sherry Appleton, Classified Employees Union; Wendy Rader-Konofalski, Washington Federation of Teachers; Larry Lael, SBCTC; Terry Teale, Council of Presidents.