

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

*Rep. Don Carlson, Republican Co-Chair; and
Rep. Phyllis Kenney, Democratic Co-Chair*

BILL ANALYSIS SSB 5330

Brief Description: Treating active duty military personnel as residents for purposes of higher education tuition.

Background: The level of tuition required for active duty military personnel, their spouses, and their dependents has been debated in the Legislature a number of times. In 1971, the statutes defining resident and non-resident students were consolidated; the non-resident differential was waived for active duty military and other groups. In the early 1980s, the tuition waiver programs were reviewed to determine whether or not to continue those not based on financial need. In 1982, the waiver of the non-resident fee differential was repealed for military as a means of generating additional general fund revenue. Projected revenue did not materialize, and in 1984, the waiver was reenacted.

Upon the recommendation of the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the 1992 Legislature made all tuition waiver programs permissive and variable. Each institution has since developed its own methodology for granting these variable and permissive waivers.

In 1993, the Legislature included in the definition of "resident student" the spouses and dependents of active duty military personnel stationed in Washington--thus allowing them to pay tuition and fees at the resident student level. At the same time, active duty military personnel remained in the non-resident category and remained eligible for the permissive and variable waiver of the non-resident tuition differential.

Currently, active duty military who attend college are partially reimbursed by the armed forces. Each military branch reimburses its members for 75 percent of tuition, up to \$125 per quarter hour or \$187.50 per semester hour. There is a cap of \$3,500 per member, per year.

Summary of Bill: Active duty military personnel stationed in Washington are included in the definition of "resident student" and pay tuition and fees at the resident student tuition rate. Active duty military are removed from the list of those who may receive a waiver equal to all or a portion of the non-resident fee differential.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed except section 1 of this act which takes effect June 30, 2002.

*Prepared for the House Higher Education Committee
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