

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
Rep. Don Carlson, Republican Co-Chair; and
Rep. Phyllis Kenney, Democratic Co-Chair

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS « ESB 5330
No House Companion Bill

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

Background:

The level of tuition required of 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 nonresident students were consolidated; the nonresident differential was waived for active duty military and other groups. In the early 1980's, 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 In 1982, the waiver of the nonresident fee differential was repealed for the military as a means of generating additional general fund revenue.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. The community college system chose to grant partial waivers to all students in all waiver categories. Each of the four-year institutions has developed its own methodology for granting the 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 that time, the active duty military personnel remained in the nonresident category and remained eligible for the permissive and variable waiver of the nonresident tuition differential.

Summary:

Active duty military personnel stationed in Washington remain nonresidents for tuition purposes. Public higher education institutions who admit such personnel must waive that portion of nonresident fees that exceed federal tuition assistance, but in no case would the required waiver bring assessed fees below the resident rate. This waiver is not subject to statutory limits on public colleges and universities.

The current statutory provision granting institutions of higher education the authority to waive all or a portion of the nonresident tuition differential is eliminated.

Office of Program Research
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