

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5318

As Passed Senate, March 11, 2013

Title: An act relating to removing the one-year waiting period for veterans or active members of the military for the purpose of eligibility for resident tuition.

Brief Description: Removing the one-year waiting period for veterans or active members of the military for purposes of eligibility for resident tuition.

Sponsors: Senators Bailey, Becker, Roach, Hobbs, Holmquist Newbry, Honeyford, Hill, Chase, Billig, Kline, Cleveland, Carrell and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 2/05/13, 2/07/13 [DP-WM].

Ways & Means: 2/26/13, 3/01/13 [DP].

Passed Senate: 3/11/13, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Bailey, Chair; Becker, Vice Chair; Kohl-Welles, Ranking Member; Baumgartner, Frockt, McAuliffe and Tom.

Staff: Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Hill, Chair; Baumgartner, Vice Chair; Honeyford, Capital Budget Chair; Hargrove, Ranking Member; Nelson, Assistant Ranking Member; Keiser, Assistant Ranking Member on the Capital Budget; Ranker, Assistant Ranking Member on the Operating Budget; Bailey, Becker, Braun, Conway, Dammeier, Fraser, Hatfield, Hewitt, Kohl-Welles, Padden, Parlette, Rivers, Schoesler, Tom and Murray.

Staff: Maria Hovde (786-7710)

Background: In Washington, as in most other states, establishing residency for tuition purposes at public institutions of higher education has two components: the establishment of an official domicile, and a waiting period of one year after establishing a domicile. A

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collection of evidence is required to prove an individual's domicile. Individuals can only have one legal domicile in the U.S. at one time.

In current law, the term resident student covers many different types of active military duty students, spouses, and dependents, including the following:

- a student who is on active military duty stationed in the state or who is a member of the Washington National Guard;
- a student who is the spouse or a dependent of a person who is on active military duty stationed in the state;
- a student who resides in Washington and is the spouse or a dependent of a person who is a member of the Washington National Guard;
- a student who resides in Washington and is on active military duty stationed certain Oregon counties; and
- a student who resides in Washington and is the spouse or a dependent of a person who resides in Washington and is on active military duty stationed in certain Oregon counties.

The term active military duty means the person is serving on active duty in:

- the armed forces of the United States government; or
- the Washington National Guard; or
- the Coast Guard, Merchant Marines, or other nonmilitary organization when such service is recognized by the U.S. government as equivalent to service in the armed forces.

Summary of Bill: The definition of resident student is revised to include the following:

- a student who is on active military duty or a member of the National Guard who entered service as a Washington resident and has maintained Washington as their domicile but is not stationed in the state;
- a student who is a spouse or a dependent of a person who is on active military duty or a member of the National Guard entered service as a Washington resident and has maintained Washington as their domicile but is not stationed in the state;
- a student who has separated from the military under honorable conditions after at least two years of service, enters an institution of higher education in Washington within one year of the date of separation, and meets one or more criteria regarding a connection or intended connection to Washington; and
- a student who is the spouse or a dependent of an individual who has separated from the military under honorable conditions after at least two years of service, and meets certain criteria regarding a connection or intended connections to Washington.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Higher Education): PRO: We are behind the bill. The State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) think the bill will be revenue neutral for community colleges. Many veterans already get certain waivers at community colleges. Central Washington University (CWU) is very veteran friendly and receives a huge number of veteran applicants. Nineteen other states, including Colorado, are already providing a similar policy. Businesses like to hire veteran workers. Veterans like to stay in Washington for quality of life and the zero income tax. Veterans have a strong work ethic. This bill merely allows veterans to compete for admission into school. Veterans will not be displacing Washington residents. We will get some great residents out of this bill. We are fixing a flaw in the system.

Persons Testifying (Higher Education): PRO: Ted Wicorek, Veterans Legislative Coalition; Mark San Souci, Department of Defense State Liaison Office; Gabriel Bowman, Associated Students of University of Washington Tacoma; Scott Copeland, SBCTC; Jaclyn Sperlich, Associated Students of CWU.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means): PRO: This bill is a benefit to the community and the economy. Currently, service members leaving active duty must wait one year in order to qualify for resident tuition rates or must pay the higher nonresident tuition rates. The GI Bill only covers resident tuition. Veterans are well-prepared for the workforce; they have skills and experience that often lead to participation in STEM degrees. Many service members already receive tuition waivers so the fiscal note may not be realized.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Ted Wicorek, Veterans Legislative Coalition; Jaclyn Sperlich, Associated Students of Central WA University; Gabe Bowman, Associated Students of University of WA Tacoma; Tristan Hanon, Associated Students of WA State University.