

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5575

As of January 16, 2018

Title: An act relating to including highway workers employed on a transportation project by a contractor in the tuition and fee exemption for children and surviving spouses of highway workers.

Brief Description: Including highway workers employed on a transportation project by a contractor in the tuition and fee exemption for children and surviving spouses of highway workers.

Sponsors: Senators Palumbo, Miloscia, Frockt, Zeiger, Wellman, Takko, Hobbs, Brown, Rolfes, Hunt, Hasegawa, Cleveland, Baumgartner, Becker, Keiser, Liias, Billig, Carlyle, Conway, Saldaña and Kuderer.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Ways & Means: 2/22/17.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands the scope of highway workers killed or totally disabled in the line of duty whose children and spouses qualify for tuition waivers to include highway workers employed by a general contractor or subcontractor on a transportation project.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Daniel Masterson (786-7454)

Background: State law authorizes institutions of higher education, defined as state universities, regional universities, The Evergreen State College, and community and technical colleges, to grant discretionary and mandatory tuition and fee waivers and exemptions. State and regional universities and The Evergreen State College are generally authorized to grant different waivers than community and technical colleges.

State universities, regional universities, and The Evergreen State College may award discretionary waivers under specified conditions to a variety of individuals, such as foreign students and residents 60 years of age or older. Mandatory waivers must be awarded in

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specific circumstances to wrongly convicted persons and their children, Washington Scholar students, and children and spouses of veterans or National Guard members. In addition, spouses and children of firefighters, state patrol officers, law enforcement officers, and highway workers who lost their lives or became totally disabled in the line of duty are exempt from payment of all tuition fees, and services and activities fees. However, children and spouses of highway workers qualify for an exemption only if the highway worker was killed or became disabled while employed by a transportation agency, including agencies, departments, or divisions of state and municipal government, but excluding government contractors.

Summary of Bill: The group of highway workers whose children and spouses are eligible for tuition waivers is expanded to include highway workers employed on a transportation project by a general contractor or subcontractor.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The fiscal impact of this bill is less than \$50,000. These highway workers provide the same benefit as those employed by a transportation agency. This bill provides important recognition of the men and women who build the state's infrastructure under dangerous conditions.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Guy Palumbo, Prime Sponsor; Cory Elliott, Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters; Jerry VanderWood, Associated General Contractors.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: PRO: Terry Tilton, Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters.