

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5119

As Passed House:
April 15, 2019

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, Keiser, Mullet, Wellman, Hunt, Lias, Conway, Frockt, Saldaña and Van De Wege.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

College & Workforce Development: 3/20/19, 3/27/19 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/15/19, 78-19.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands the category of highway workers, for purposes of mandatory tuition waivers for children and surviving spouses, to highway workers employed on a transportation project by a general contractor or subcontractor.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COLLEGE & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Hansen, Chair; Entenman, Vice Chair; Leavitt, Vice Chair; Bergquist, Mead, Paul, Pollet, Ramos, Sells and Slatter.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Van Werven, Ranking Minority Member; Gildon, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Graham, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Kraft, Rude, Sutherland and Young.

Staff: Trudes Tango (786-7384).

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Background:

State law authorizes the public institutions of higher education to grant both discretionary and mandatory tuition waivers or exemptions for certain categories of students. Both the four-year institutions and the community and technical colleges are required to waive tuition and services and activities fees for children and surviving spouses of law enforcement officers and firefighters who are killed or become totally disabled in the line of duty.

The public four-year institutions of higher education are also required to waive tuition and student and activities fees for children and surviving spouses of highway workers employed by a transportation agency. "Transportation agency" means a state or local government agency that has as its primary function the construction and maintenance of the highways and roads within the state. A transportation agency does not include a government contractor.

Summary of Bill:

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

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) There has been a recent push for the Washington Department of Transportation (DOT) to use more contractors on their projects rather than the DOT employees. The workers under contractors do the exact same jobs and work alongside the DOT employees, but they do not have the same benefits if they get injured or killed on the job. There are not many highway worker deaths, and there will likely be less than one person a year who would get a tuition waiver under this bill.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Palumbo, prime sponsor; Cory Elliott, Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters; and Jerry Vanderwood, Association of General Contractors.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.