

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5119

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Higher Education & Workforce Development, February 5, 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: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 1/31/19, 2/05/19 [DP-WM, DNP, w/oRec].

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 HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.
Signed by Senators Palumbo, Chair; Randall, Vice Chair; Lias and Wellman.

Minority Report: Do not pass.
Signed by Senator Holy, Ranking Member.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.
Signed by Senator Brown.

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.

Staff: Alicia Kinne-Clawson (786-7407)

Background: State law authorizes higher education institutions, 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 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 all tuition, 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: A lot of the transportation work gets done by contracted highway workers. This bill fixes the disparity for contracted highway workers. Contracted highway workers work right alongside public employees on bridges and tunnels. The workers comp system does not cover these benefits. This bill brings parity to workers in this industry.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Terry Tilton, NW Carpenters.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.