

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6116

---

As of January 24, 2020

**Title:** An act relating to assisting spouses and dependents of active duty military by ensuring affordable access to higher education.

**Brief Description:** Assisting spouses and dependents of active duty military by ensuring affordable access to higher education.

**Sponsors:** Senators O'Ban, Becker, Conway, Wilson, L. and Holy.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Higher Education & Workforce Development: 1/23/20.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Modifies the definition of in-state resident for tuition purposes to include spouses and dependents of active duty military who are accepted to a higher education institution before the military member is reassigned out-of-state, as long as the spouse or dependent enrolls in the institution.
- Restructures the residency statute for students who are active duty military and National Guard members and their spouses and dependents.

---

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

**Staff:** Kellee Gunn (786-7429)

**Background:** In Washington, as in most other states, establishing residency for tuition purposes at public higher education institutions has two components—the establishment of an official domicile, and a waiting period of one year after establishing a domicile. A collection of evidence is required to prove an individual's domicile. A person may only have one legal domicile in the U.S. at one time.

In 2014, 2015, and 2019 the Legislature revised the definition of resident student for active duty military, veterans, and their families. Some of these changes were in response to federal legislation such as The Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act. The changes allowed for the current military members, military veterans, and the spouses, former spouses,

---

*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.*

and dependents of military members to qualify for residency under certain conditions. One such condition is if a military or National Guard member is reassigned out-of-state, the spouse or dependent still qualifies for in-state residency if the spouse or dependent is already enrolled and remains continuously enrolled in a degree program.

**Summary of Bill:** Students who are already accepted or enrolled in a higher education institution in Washington may maintain resident status if their active duty parent or spouse is reassigned out of state. The residency statute for students who are active duty military, National Guard, or the spouses or dependents of active duty military or National Guard is restructured.

**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: This is a technical fix, but an important one. This would be helpful to the military spouse or dependent that would fall under the changes in this bill. Our public four-year institutions are committed to supporting military students.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Steve O'Ban, Prime Sponsor; Ruben Flores, Council of Presidents.

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