

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6164

As Reported by House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to allowing a student who is a military dependent to maintain residency status if the person on active military duty is reassigned out-of-state.

Brief Description: Concerning residency status of military dependents.

Sponsors: Senators B. Sheldon, Shin, Kastama, Oke, Swecker, Franklin, Winsley, Rasmussen, Brown, Eide, Kohl-Welles, Haugen, Schmidt, Murray and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/20/04 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides continued eligibility for in-state tuition for the spouse and dependents of persons on active military duty who are reassigned outside Washington.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Kenney, Chair; Cox, Ranking Minority Member; Priest, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Boldt, Condotta, Jarrett, McCoy, Morrell and Ormsby.

Staff: Sydney Forrester (786-7120).

Background:

Washington law regarding residency for higher education tuition purposes provides eligibility for in-state tuition rates to members of the Washington National Guard and persons on active military duty stationed in Washington. In addition, the spouse and dependents of persons on active military duty are eligible for in-state tuition rates. The law, however, does not provide for this eligibility to continue if the person on active duty is reassigned outside Washington.

Summary of Bill:

A student enrolled in a degree program who is the spouse or dependent of a person on active military duty stationed in Washington will remain eligible for in-state tuition if the active duty person is reassigned out-of-state so long as the student remains continuously enrolled in a degree program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Dependents and spouses of active duty military personnel currently have to pay out-of-state tuition when the active duty person is reassigned outside of Washington. This bill is a high priority for the Department of Defense (DOD) and will demonstrate that Washington is a military-friendly state. The DOD has asked that all states consider taking certain steps to further support military families. Washington currently meets two of the three criteria by allowing both active duty military stationed in the state and their spouse and dependents to qualify for resident tuition rates. This bill would make it possible for those spouses and dependents who are enrolled in college to continue toward completion of their programs at the in-state tuition rate if the active duty person is reassigned outside of Washington.

There currently are 12,000 military personnel from Fort Lewis who are deployed outside Washington. The military life is a mobile life and this would enhance the stability of military families, especially when the reassignment is overseas, or for a short duration, because these families typically would remain in Washington.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Sheldon, prime sponsor; Kenneth McKay, McCord Air Force Base; and M. Kathleen Connolly, Fort Lewis Army Education.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.