

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1486

As Reported by House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to exempting the surviving spouse and children of certain law enforcement officers or fire fighters from paying tuition and fees.

Brief Description: Exempting the surviving spouse and children of certain law enforcement officers or fire fighters from paying tuition and fees.

Sponsors: Representatives O'Brien, Delvin, Cairnes, Lovick, Hankins, Simpson, Roach, Bush, Fromhold, Ericksen, McDonald, Woods, Cooper, Campbell, Anderson and Kenney.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/11/03, 2/26/03 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Creates a permissive tuition waiver for all or a portion of undergraduate tuition for the surviving spouse of a deceased law enforcement officer or fire fighter.
- Limits existing permissive waiver authority to undergraduate tuition only for certain veterans and for the children of a deceased or disabled law enforcement officer or fire fighter.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Kenney, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Cox, Ranking Minority Member; Priest, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Boldt, Chase, Clements, Condotta, Gombosky, Jarrett, Lantz, McCoy and Morrell.

Staff: Sydney Forrester (786-7120).

Background:

The state and regional universities and The Evergreen State College are permitted to waive all or a portion of tuition and fees for veterans enrolled prior to 1978 who are no

longer eligible for federal educational and vocational benefits, and for the children of law enforcement officers and fire fighters who were killed or became disabled in the line of duty. In order to be eligible for a full or partial tuition exemption, the children of deceased or disabled law enforcement officers or firefighters must enroll in a college or university within 10 years of high school graduation.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The current permissive tuition waiver authority for veterans enrolled before 1978, and for the children of deceased or totally disabled law enforcement officers or fire fighters is limited to all or a portion of undergraduate tuition only. The surviving spouse of a law enforcement officer or fire fighter killed in the line of duty is added to the list of persons who may be granted a partial or full waiver of undergraduate tuition.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill retains current law making the waivers permissive. The original bill would have made the waivers mandatory, in addition to adding the surviving spouse. The substitute bill also limits the waiver authority to undergraduate tuition only.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Current law makes the waivers permissive. Some children left behind when an officer has died in the line of duty have been denied waivers. Since 1977 there have been 42 police officers killed in the line of duty. Undergraduate tuition should be the target of the waivers, and disabled should refer to totally disabled.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Bob Thurston, Washington State Troopers Association; and Bill Hanson, Washington Council of Police Officers and Sheriffs.