

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6766

As Passed House:

March 1, 2006

Title: An act relating to the national guard conditional scholarship.

Brief Description: Regarding the national guard conditional scholarship.

Sponsors: By Senators Schmidt, McAuliffe and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education & Workforce Education: 2/21/06, 2/23/06 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/1/06, 98-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands eligibility for Washington National Guard conditional scholarships to include students who attend programs approved under the Montgomery G.I. Bill.
- Gives priority to eligible students who attend institutions in Washington that are accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Kenney, Chair; Sells, Vice Chair; Cox, Ranking Minority Member; Rodne, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Buri, Dunn, Fromhold, Hasegawa, Ormsby, Priest, Roberts and Sommers.

Staff: Jennifer Thornton (786-7111).

Background:

The Washington State National Guard Conditional Scholarship program was created in 1994, and is administered by the Office of the Adjutant General of the State Military Department. It provides scholarships to eligible members of the Washington National Guard who continue their service after receiving funds. The scholarship is in the form of a loan that is forgiven if the recipient completes the requisite service time in the Washington National Guard. For each academic year of credit that a student receives scholarship money, he or she must remain an active/participating member for 12 additional months. Scholarship recipients who do not fulfill the service obligation are required to repay the loaned funds plus 8 percent interest.

Scholarship recipients must complete courses at institutions of higher education located in Washington State that are accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges. The student's goal must be a degree or certificate program. Additionally, the student must maintain a 2.5 cumulative grade point average and individual course grades of 2.5 or better.

The federal Montgomery G.I. Bill provides education benefits that may be used while on active duty or after separation from active duty and by members of the Selected Reserve of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard, and the Army and Air National Guard. Eligibility criteria and benefits vary depending on the type and date of enlistment and on the nature of the educational program. Approved training programs under the Montgomery G.I. Bill include degree programs, certificate or correspondence courses, cooperative training, independent study programs, apprenticeship/on-the-job training, and vocational flight training programs.

Summary of Bill:

The list of institutions of higher education which students can attend to be eligible for the Washington National Guard Conditional Scholarship is expanded to include Washington institutions that provide approved training under the Montgomery G.I. Bill. Approved programs include degree programs, certificate or correspondence courses, cooperative training, independent study programs, apprenticeship/on-the-job training, and vocational flight training programs.

The rules and guidelines adopted by the Office of the Adjutant General include establishing a priority for eligible students attending a Washington institution of higher education that is accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: The co-chairs of the Military Veterans Affairs Committee hoped to create a full package of House and Senate bills. This is a component of that package. The National Guard Conditional Scholarship Program has been very successful. This expands the scholarship program, so that it can be used by students in apprenticeships or attending trade schools. Therefore, it serves to broaden student options.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Schmidt, sponsor; and Doug Mayne, Washington Military Department.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.