

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## ESSB 5040

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Higher Education

**Title:** An act relating to the creation of a survivors' endowed scholarship program.

**Brief Description:** Creating a survivors' endowed scholarship program.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Eide, Franklin, Fairley, Shin, Rockefeller, Weinstein, Marr, Oemig, Hobbs, Haugen, Kilmer, Murray, Keiser, Rasmussen, Jacobsen, Kauffman and Kohl-Welles).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Higher Education: 3/21/07, 3/29/07 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill  
(As Amended by House Committee)**

- Creates the Survivors Endowed Scholarship for children and spouses of military veterans killed in a combat zone.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Wallace, Chair; Sells, Vice Chair; Anderson, Ranking Minority Member; Buri, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hasegawa, Jarrett, McIntire, Roberts and Sommers.

**Staff:** Andrew Colvin (786-7304).

**Background:**

Washington's institutions of higher education may waive all or a portion of tuition and fees for qualifying surviving spouses and children of military veterans and National Guard members who died, became totally disabled, were captured, or were declared missing in action while in active military or naval service. Generally, the veteran or National Guard member must have served in a war or conflict on foreign soil or in international waters, or in support of those serving on foreign soil or in international waters.

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*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.*

At the federal level, the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program provides funds for education and training to eligible dependents of certain veterans, including veterans who, in the line-of-duty, died, were permanently and totally disabled, were missing in action, or captured.

Washington law currently provides for a number of higher education scholarship programs. Some of these programs, such as the American Indian Endowed Scholarship and the Foster Care Endowed Scholarship, use endowed funds. With an endowed fund, only the income from the fund, and not the principle, is used to provide scholarships. There are currently no Washington scholarship programs for surviving dependents of fallen soldiers.

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### **Summary of Amended Bill:**

The Survivor's Endowed Scholarship is created to provide post-secondary educational scholarships to eligible children and spouses of veterans or National Guard members who lost their lives due to military service in a combat zone. To be eligible for a scholarship, the surviving children and spouse must meet the following criteria:

- be residents of Washington at the time of the veteran's deployment to a combat zone or death as a result of the deployment;
- be a high school graduate or General Equivalency Degree recipient; and
- must be making satisfactory progress towards completing a program and maintaining at least a 2.0 Grade Point Average.

In addition, children must be between the ages of 16 and 26, and spouses must apply for the scholarship within 10 years of the veteran's date of death.

Scholarships may be awarded for a degree or certificate program at a public or private college or university in Washington, or at a private vocational school licensed by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. Scholarships may also be awarded for apprenticeships approved by the Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council.

The amount of a scholarship may cover a student's demonstrated financial need, including tuition, fees, books, supplies, transportation, room, board, personal expenses, and child care. However, the amount of a scholarship is capped at the amount received by a student at a state research university (currently the University of Washington or Washington State University).

Scholarships under this program may be provided for up to four years, and do not affect a student's eligibility for other state financial aid programs.

### **Administration of the Scholarship Program**

The scholarship program is administered by the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB). The HECB shall create an advisory committee to assist with the development of the program, including screening and selection criteria. A screening committee shall be developed to assist in selecting scholarship recipients. Membership for both committees shall include representatives from specified groups.

## Funding for the Scholarship Program

To fund the program, two accounts are created. One is a trust fund, into which state appropriations for the scholarship will be deposited. The other is an endowment fund for the scholarship program. The endowment fund may receive money from any source. When private donations to the endowment fund exceed \$25,000, the HECB shall deposit state matching funds from the trust fund on a one-to-one basis. After the initial match of \$25,000, state matching funds shall be deposited in the endowment fund semiannually as long as funds are available in the trust fund.

In addition to the endowment fund, the HECB may award scholarships from funds appropriated to the HECB for this purpose, from private donations, or from any other funds given to the HECB for the program. However, the initial \$25,000 in the endowment fund may not be disbursed.

### **Amended Bill Compared to Engrossed Substitute Bill:**

Responsibility for soliciting donations for the program is transferred from the HECB to the advisory committee.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

### **Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) Veterans don't get a fair shake, and this bill will help veterans' families. The vision for the next biennium is to move away from reliance on tuition waivers and provide this kind of help to veterans' families in the form of scholarships. This will also free up more money for colleges to provide tuition waivers under the many other waiver programs. We need to do this for the surviving families. The military doesn't choose a war, but goes when called to protect our freedom. The scholarship program created under this bill will help to educate the leaders of tomorrow.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Skip Dreps, Northwest Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America; Chris Thompson, Higher Education Coordinating Board; and Dick Marcelynas and Frosty Hulsey, Veterans Legislative Coalition.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.