

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5040

As Passed Senate, February 16, 2007

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: 1/22/07 [DPS].
Passed Senate: 2/16/07, 42-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5040 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Shin, Chair; Kilmer, Vice Chair; Delvin, Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Schoesler and Sheldon.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: Currently, higher education institutions are permitted to reduce all or a portion of tuition for certain types of students and for various purposes, including a child and/or the surviving spouse of an military veteran or National Guard member who lost his or her life or became totally disabled while engaged in active federal military or naval service. There is currently no scholarship provided for surviving dependents of fallen soldiers. The federal 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, are permanently and totally disabled, are missing in action, or captured.

Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill: The Survivor's Endowed Scholarship is created. The surviving children and spouse of a person who lost their life due to service in a combat zone may be eligible for the scholarship if they were residents of Washington at the time of deployment to a combat zone or death as a result of the deployment. In addition, a child of the deceased military veteran must meet the following criteria: (1) be between the ages of 16 and 26; (2) be a high school graduate or GED recipient; and (3) must be making satisfactory progress towards completing a program and maintaining at least a 2.0 GPA. A spouse of the deceased military veteran must meet the following criteria: (1) apply for the scholarship within 10 years of the date of death of the veteran; (2) be a high school graduate or GED

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recipient; and (3) must be making satisfactory progress towards completing a program and maintaining at least a 2.0 GPA.

The scholarship program is initially funded by private donations. When the private donations exceed \$25,000, the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) deposits state matching funds on a one-to-one basis. Funds are disbursed until exhausted, but the initial \$25,000 may not be disbursed. An advisory and screening committee is established with membership appointed by the Governor. The committee assists HECB in publicizing the program, soliciting and accepting donations and grants, and selecting scholarship recipients.

The scholarships may be for a maximum of four years at a state research university, but in no case may they exceed the students financial need. These scholarships do not affect the students eligibility for other state financial aid programs. The scholarships may be used for the costs of a post-secondary education including tuition, room, board, and books at any public or private college or university, private vocational school, or apprenticeship program in Washington.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 15, 2007.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: PRO: This is a simple bill to help families who are suffering from losing a spouse. This is really the least we can do to show our appreciation for the sacrifices these families have and are making. Additional language to provide help for the Higher Education Coordinating Board when they are trying to raise funds would be appropriate.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Eide, prime sponsor; Chris Thompson, Higher Education Coordinating Board.