

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6371

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, January 23, 2008

Title: An act relating to tuition and fee waivers for veterans' families.

Brief Description: Regarding tuition and fee waivers for veterans' families.

Sponsors: Senators Hewitt, Hobbs, Shin, Parlette, King, Rockefeller, Swecker, Brandland, McCaslin, Haugen, Kohl-Welles, Rasmussen, Kilmer and Sheldon.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 1/23/08 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6371 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: In 2007 the Legislature passed SSB 5002 unanimously. It provides that state higher education institutions must waive all tuition and fees for the children and spouses of eligible veterans or National Guard members who died, are permanently and totally disabled, are missing in action, or are prisoners of war. To be eligible, a child must be a Washington domiciliary between the age of 17 and 26. A surviving spouse, to be eligible, must be a Washington domiciliary, must not have remarried, and it must have been ten years or less since the loss. Each recipient's continued eligibility is subject to the school's satisfactory progress policy. Concern has been expressed that the various institutions of higher education have been interpreting the provisions differently.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): It is clarified that the qualifying disability or loss of life must be a result of serving in active military service rather than while engaged in military service. If a death results from a total disability, the surviving spouse has ten years from the date of death in which to receive the waiver. "Totally disabled" means that a person has been determined to be 100 percent disabled by the federal Department of Veterans Affairs. It is also clarified that "fees" include all assessments for costs incurred as a condition of a student's full participation in coursework and related activities.

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.

Students receiving the waivers may attend full- or part-time, but in no case, may the waivers exceed 200 quarter credits or the semester equivalent. Tuition waivers for graduate students are encouraged, but not required.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute): The fee waivers are not subject to tuition waiver cap limitations.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: None.

Persons Testifying: No one.