

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1887

As Reported by House Committee On:
Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs

Title: An act relating to creating the student veterans' support program.

Brief Description: Creating the student veterans' support program.

Sponsors: Representatives Stanford, MacEwen, Gregerson, Peterson, Orwall, Wylie, Moscoso, Tarleton, Zeiger, Kilduff and Bergquist.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs: 2/9/15, 2/16/15 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Creates the Washington Student Veterans' Support Program.
- Allows for community and technical colleges and regional universities certified by the Partners for Veteran Supportive Services Campuses Program to be eligible for educational grants from the Washington Student Veteran's Support Program.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Appleton, Chair; Robinson, Vice Chair; Johnson, Ranking Minority Member; Zeiger, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hawkins, Sawyer and Van De Wege.

Staff: Kirsten Lee (786-7133).

Background:

Partners for Veteran Supportive Campuses Certificate Program.

In 2009 the Governor and state agencies jointly signed a Partners for Veteran Supportive Campuses Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to support veteran-related education

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goals. On November 21, 2014, the Governor and state agencies signed an updated version of the MOU. The updated MOU reaffirmed the state's commitment to assist veterans and their families to achieve post-secondary goals.

Under the MOU, college campuses, including community and technical colleges, may apply for a Partner for Veteran Supportive Campus Certificate. The certificate acknowledges the schools' commitment to support post-secondary education for veterans.

Any post-secondary education or training institution is eligible to apply as long as the campus is approved by a Washington State Approving Authority to accept G.I. Bill benefits. There are two Washington State Approving Authorities, the Workforce Board and Washington Student Achievement Council. To submit an application, campuses must include examples of how they will achieve the following areas of success:

- create a culture of trust and connectedness across the campus community to promote well-being and success for veterans;
- ensure consistent and sustained support from campus leadership;
- implement an early alert system to ensure all veterans receive academic, career, and financial advice before challenges become overwhelming;
- coordinate and centralize campus efforts for all veterans, together with the creation of a designated space (even if limited in size);
- collaborate with local communities and organizations, including government agencies, to align and coordinate various services for veterans;
- utilize a uniform set of data tools to collect and track information on veterans, including demographics, retention and degree completion;
- provide comprehensive professional development for faculty and staff on issues and challenges unique to veterans; and
- develop systems that ensure sustainability of effective practices for veterans.

A total of 30 campuses have signed an individual Partner for Veteran Supportive Campuses Certificate to date.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Washington Student Veteran's Program (Program) is established under the authority of the Department of Veterans' Affairs (Department). The purpose of the Program is to provide grants for community and technical colleges and regional universities who have submitted an application for the Partners for Veteran Supportive Campus Program (PVSCP). The grants can be used to provide student services, academic advising, or other purposes consistent with the PVSCP. Eligible applicant schools may receive a grant of up to \$20,000 every two years. The Department evaluates the program applications.

State appropriations for the Washington State Veteran's Program are limited to no more than \$100,000 per fiscal biennium.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill allows Eastern, Central, and Western Washington Universities, including satellite campuses, to also be eligible for Student Veterans' Support Program grants if they have submitted an application for the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs Partners for Veteran Supportive Campuses certificate.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 5, 2015.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Partners for Veterans Supported Campus program has been around since 2009. When the MOU was updated, the updated version includes more framework on how or college can apply for funding and apply best practices to work together to help veterans succeed in their higher education goals. The program takes actual veterans and active duty members and gives them the resources and what is needed for the transitions. An amendment to add four year institutions would be supported because many who start at two-year community or technical programs go on to four-year bachelor programs. There is pride in making campuses successful and supportive of veterans.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Stanford, prime sponsor; Ted Wicorek, Veterans Legislative Coalition; Heidi Audette, Washington State Department Veterans Affairs; Scott Copeland, Student Board for Community & Technical Colleges; Antonio Sanche, Central Washington University; and Paul Bell, Office of Student Legislative Affairs of Bellevue College.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.