

FINAL BILL REPORT

SB 5197

C 297 L 20
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning the Washington national guard postsecondary education grant program.

Sponsors: Senators Hobbs, Zeiger, Wagoner, Short, Bailey, Hunt, Fortunato and Keiser; by request of Military Department.

Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
House Committee on Housing, Community Development & Veterans
House Committee on Appropriations

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, the student must remain an active or 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 higher education institutions 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 or on-the-job training, and vocational flight training programs.

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.

Summary: The Washington National Guard Conditional Scholarship program is renamed the Washington National Guard Postsecondary Education Grant Program. A student is eligible for the grant program if:

- they are a member of the Washington National Guard;
- they attend an accredited institution in Washington State;
- a baccalaureate degree or higher from any postsecondary institution has not been awarded;
- they are an active drilling member in good standing in the Washington National Guard;
- they have completed and submitted an application for student aid;
- they are a resident student; and
- they agree to fulfill the student's service obligation.

Subject to the amount appropriated for the grants, an eligible student may receive an award up to the cost of tuition and fees, less other federal, state, and institutional grant or waiver aid. In addition, eligible students may receive up to \$500 for books and materials.

Eligibility is limited to five years or 125 percent of the published length of the program in which the student is enrolled.

Eligible participants in the grant program incur an obligation to repay the grant with interest, unless they serve in the Washington National Guard for one year for each year they receive the award.

The Office of Student Financial Assistance is responsible for administering the grant program, coordinating with the Washington Military Department to select eligible participants, and developing rules related to repayment obligations.

Votes on Final Passage:

2019 Regular Session

Senate 43 1

2020 Regular Session

Senate 44 1

House 97 0

Effective: June 11, 2020