

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5545

As of January 12, 2022

Title: An act relating to survivor benefits.

Brief Description: Concerning survivor benefits.

Sponsors: Senators Wagoner, Conway, Dhingra, Lovick, Mullet, Short and Wilson, J..

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 1/13/22.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Clarifies that a surviving spouse or domestic partner of an eligible veteran or National Guard member is eligible for tuition waiver benefits for ten years after the death, total disability, or POW or MIA status of the eligible veteran or National Guard member.
- Adds the date of federal determination of death or total disability as a qualifying event for the ten year period of eligibility for the waiver.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Alicia Kinne-Clawson (786-7407)

Background: Washington Military Tuition Waiver. Higher education institutions may waive all or a portion of tuition and fees for an eligible veteran or National Guard member, subject to limitations. An eligible veteran or National Guard member is a Washington resident who was:

- on active or reserve duty in the United States Armed Forces; or
- a National Guard member called to active duty who served in a war or conflict fought on foreign soil or in international waters; and

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

- if discharged from service, was discharged honorably.

Higher education institutions must waive all tuition and fees for:

- a child and the surviving spouse or domestic partner of an eligible veteran or National Guard member who became totally disabled as a result of active service, or who is a prisoner of war (POW); and
- a child and the surviving spouse or domestic partner of an eligible veteran or National Guard member who lost their life as a result of serving in active duty.

The surviving spouse or domestic partner of the eligible veteran or National Guard member has ten years from the date of the event to receive benefits.

Summary of Bill: A surviving spouse or surviving domestic partner of the eligible veteran or national guard member has ten years to receive tuition waiver benefits under the waiver from the last recurring event:

- date of death;
- date of total disability;
- federal determination of service-connected death or total disability; or
- federal determination of POW or missing in action status.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 11, 2022

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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