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**HOUSE BILL 1943**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2024 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Leavitt, Jacobsen, Ryu, Rule, Christian, Couture, Bronoske, Slatter, Chambers, Reeves, Reed, Graham, Timmons, Orwall, Paul, Riccelli, and Shavers

AN ACT Relating to the Washington national guard postsecondary education grant program; and amending RCW 28B.103.010, 28B.103.020, and 28B.103.030.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 28B.103.010 and 2022 c 68 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

((~~Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the~~)) The definitions in this section apply throughout this ((~~section and RCW 28B.103.020 and 28B.103.030~~)) chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Dependent" means a person enrolled as a dependent in the defense enrollment eligibility reporting system.

(2) "Eligible student" means a member of the Washington national guard ((~~who attends an institution of higher education that is located in this state and accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, or an institution that is located in this state that provides approved training under the Montgomery GI Bill, and who~~)) or the spouse or dependent of, and designated by, a member who agrees to fulfill his or her service obligation and meets any additional selection criteria adopted by the office and all of the following participation requirements:

(a) ((~~Enrolled~~)) Is enrolled in courses or a program that lead to a postsecondary degree or certificate at an institution of higher education located in the state and accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, or an institution that is located in the state that provides approved training under the Montgomery GI Bill;

(b) Is an active drilling member, or the spouse or dependent of, and designated by, an active drilling member. The member must be in good standing in the Washington national guard as specified in rules adopted by the office for implementation of the ((~~Washington national guard postsecondary education~~)) grant;

(c) Has completed and submitted an application for student aid approved by the office; and

(d) Is a resident student as defined in RCW 28B.15.012((~~; and~~

~~(e) Agrees to fulfill his or her service obligation~~)).

((~~(2)~~)) (3) "Forgiven" or "to forgive" or "forgiveness" means either to render service in the Washington national guard in lieu of monetary repayment, or to be relieved of the service obligation under rules adopted by the office.

((~~(3)~~)) (4) "Grant" means the Washington national guard postsecondary education grant as established in RCW 28B.103.020.

((~~(4)~~)) (5) "Member" means a member of the Washington national guard who has received, or whose spouse or dependent has received, a grant under this chapter.

(6) "Office" means the office of student financial assistance created in RCW 28B.76.090.

((~~(5)~~)) (7) "Participant" means an eligible student who has received a ((~~Washington national guard postsecondary education~~)) grant under this chapter.

((~~(6)~~)) (8) "Service obligation" means ((~~serving~~)) an obligation by the member to serve in the Washington national guard for a time period of at least one year of service in the Washington national guard for each year the ((~~student~~)) participant receives a ((~~Washington national guard postsecondary education~~)) grant.

**Sec.**  RCW 28B.103.020 and 2022 c 68 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

Subject to amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the Washington national guard postsecondary education grant program is established. The program shall be administered by the office. In administering the program, the powers and duties of the office shall include, but need not be limited to:

(1) With the assistance of the Washington military department, the selection of eligible students to receive the ((~~Washington national guard postsecondary education~~)) grant as follows:

(a) An eligible student may receive a grant under this section to help pay for postsecondary education program costs as approved by the office. Grants may not:

(i) Exceed the maximum Washington college grant as defined in RCW 28B.92.030, plus $500 for books and supplies;

(ii) Exceed the ((~~student's~~)) participant's cost of attendance, when combined with all other public and private grants, scholarships, and waiver assistance the ((~~student~~)) participant receives; and

(iii) Result in reduction of a participant's federal or other state financial aid.

(b) The Washington military department shall ensure that data needed to identify eligible ((~~recipients~~)) students are promptly transmitted to the office.

(c) The annual amount of each ((~~Washington national guard postsecondary education~~)) grant may vary, but may not exceed the annual cost of undergraduate tuition fees and services and activities fees at the University of Washington, plus an allowance for books and supplies.

(d) ((~~Washington national guard postsecondary education grant~~)) Grant eligibility may not extend beyond ((~~five~~)) six years or ((~~one hundred twenty-five~~)) 150 percent of the published length of the program in which the ((~~student~~)) participant is enrolled or the credit or clock-hour equivalent;

(2) The award of grants funded by federal and state funds, private donations, or repayments from any participant who does not complete the participant's service obligation;

(3) The adoption of necessary rules and policies, including establishing a priority for eligible students attending an institution of higher education located in this state that is accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges;

(4) The adoption of participant selection criteria. The criteria may include but need not be limited to requirements for: Satisfactory academic progress, enrollment in courses or programs that lead to a baccalaureate degree or an associate degree or a certificate, and satisfactory participation as a member of the Washington national guard;

(5) With the assistance of the Washington military department, the notification of ((~~participants~~)) members of their additional service obligation or required repayment of the ((~~Washington national guard postsecondary education~~)) grant; and

(6) The collection of repayments from ((~~participants~~)) members who do not meet the service obligations.

**Sec.**  RCW 28B.103.030 and 2020 c 297 s 3 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) ((~~Participants in the Washington national guard postsecondary education grant program~~)) Members incur an obligation to repay the grant, with interest, unless they serve in the Washington national guard for one year for each year they or their spouse or dependent received the grant, under rules adopted by the office.

(2) The office shall adopt rules addressing the terms for repayment, including applicable interest rates, fees, ((~~and~~)) deferments, and appeals, by a ((~~participant~~)) member who does not render service as a member of the Washington national guard necessary to satisfy his or her service obligation.

(3) The office is responsible for collection of repayments made under this section. The office shall exercise due diligence in such collection, maintaining all necessary records to ensure that maximum repayments are made. Collection and servicing of repayments under this section shall be pursued using the full extent of law, including wage garnishment if necessary. The office is responsible to forgive all or parts of such repayments under the criteria established in this section, and shall maintain all necessary records of forgiven payments.

(4) Receipts from the payment of principal or interest paid by or on behalf of participants shall be deposited with the office and shall be used to cover the costs of administration of the grant, maintaining necessary records, and making collections under subsection (3) of this section. The office shall maintain accurate records of these costs, and all receipts beyond those necessary to pay such costs shall be used to make grant awards to eligible students.

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