

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2004

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Higher Education & Workforce Development, February 21, 2024

Title: An act relating to early registration at institutions of higher education for eligible veterans, national guard members, active duty military members, and their spouses, domestic partners, and dependents.

Brief Description: Providing early registration at institutions of higher education for military students.

Sponsors: Representatives McEntire, Leavitt, Couture, Slatter, Ryu, Senn, Graham, Callan, Sandlin and Shavers.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/7/24, 95-0.

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 2/14/24, 2/21/24 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires institutions of higher education that provide early course registration to offer early course registration for students who are eligible veterans, national guard members, active duty military members, and their spouses, domestic partners, and dependents.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Nobles, Chair; Hansen, Vice Chair; Holy, Ranking Member; Hawkins and Randall.

Staff: Alicia Kinne-Clawson (786-7407)

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.

Background: Early Course Registration. Public institutions of higher education sometimes order student course registration based on the number of credits a student has been awarded or based on a student's class standing. Early course registrations vary depending on each institution's policies. Some institutions do not offer early course registration.

Until 2022 institutions that offered an early course registration period for any segment of the student population are required to have a process in place to offer students who are eligible veterans or National Guard members, or their spouses who are receiving veteran's education benefits, early course registration. New students that completed all of their admission processes were required to be offered an early course registration period. Continuing and returning former students who met enrollment requirements were also required to be offered early course registration among continuing students with the same level of class standing or credit as determined by the attending institution and the institutional policies.

Summary of Bill: Beginning in the 2024-25 academic year, institutions of higher education that offer any early course registration to students must have a process in place to offer early course registration to students who are eligible veterans, National Guard members, active duty military, and their spouses, domestic partners, and dependents.

An eligible veteran or National Guard member is defined as an individual residing in Washington who was an active or reserve member of the United States military or naval forces, or a National Guard member called to active duty, who served in active federal service, or in a war or conflict fought on foreign soil or in international waters or in support of those serving on foreign soil or in international waters, and if discharged from service, has received an honorable discharge or any other discharge if the sole reason for discharge is due to gender or sexuality.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This was a policy that was put in place over a decade ago and met its expiration. Many institutions are already doing this. This is just the state's way of making sure they are continuing to take care of these individuals. Early registration for classes is important for military affiliated students. This is important for the use of GI benefits. We are pleased to see dependents are included.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Joel McEntire, Prime Sponsor; Collin Bannister, The Washington Student Association and ASWSU.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.