

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2027

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, APRIL 1, 1991

**Brief Description:** Providing for refund of or credit toward new enrollment for higher education costs for students deployed because of the Gulf war.

**SPONSORS:** House Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Ballard, Jacobsen, Bowman, Vance, Tate, Brough, Paris, Ferguson, Casada, Chandler, Forner, Moyer, Fuhrman, Holland, Wynne, May, Mitchell, P. Johnson, Betrozoff and Miller).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Saling, Chairman; Patterson, Vice Chairman; Bauer, Bluechel, Cantu, Jesernig, Skratek, Stratton, and von Reichbauer.

**Staff:** Scott Huntley (786-7421)

**Hearing Dates:** March 28, 1991; April 1, 1991

**BACKGROUND:**

By law, under a variety of circumstances, state colleges and universities are permitted to refund or cancel a student's tuition and fees. Students who withdraw before the sixth day of instruction may receive a full refund. Students who withdraw after that day may receive a refund of up to one-half of tuition and fees. Institutions may adopt special policies for students who withdraw for medical reasons and for students who are called into military service.

Once classes begin, students who drop out of private vocational schools are entitled to a partial refund. The percentage of the mandated refund is determined by rules adopted by the State Board for Vocational Education.

Students who drop out of private colleges registered with the Higher Education Coordinating Board are entitled to refunds based on a stratified system established by the board. No refunds are required after the 14th day of instruction.

State law does not address refunds for students attending private four-year colleges and universities that are accredited by an association recognized by the Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Students who have received various forms of state funded financial aid may be required to repay all or a part of that aid if the student withdraws from school. Students who are participating in conditional scholarship programs may have to begin repaying the conditional scholarship, plus interest, when the student withdraws from school. Deferrals are possible at the option of the Higher Education Coordinating Board. Depending on the program, deferrals must either be consistent with the provisions of the federal guaranteed loan program, or may be granted in the event of special circumstances.

**SUMMARY:**

For the purposes of this legislation, the term "eligible student" is defined. An eligible student must meet three conditions. First, the student must have enrolled in a public or private institution of postsecondary education in Washington on or after August 2, 1990. Next, the student must be unable to complete his or her academic term or period of enrollment due to deployment either in the Persian Gulf combat zone or in another location in support of the combat zone. Finally, the student must verify his or her situation through military service records, movement orders, or through a certified letter signed by the student's installation personnel officer.

Eligible students attending state colleges, universities, and vocational-technical institutes have two options. They may request and receive a full refund of tuition and fees, or they may re-enroll when they return. Students choosing to re-enroll will be exempt from the payment of additional tuition and fees for one academic term. They will not be counted in official enrollment statistics, and the institutions will not be reimbursed for their attendance. Institutions may apply for a supplemental appropriation to serve students exercising a re-enrollment option.

Private institutions of higher education and vocational schools are encouraged to provide students who were deployed in the Persian Gulf combat zone with the choice of either tuition refunds or one free term of enrollment.

Eligible students who have received a grant under the state need grant program will not be required to repay the unused portion of any grant they have received. The repayment requirements of conditional scholarship programs will not apply to eligible students. The Higher Education Coordinating Board will temporarily or permanently defer repayments for eligible students. The deferrals will be in effect for eligible students participating in the following programs: future teachers conditional scholarship, nurses conditional scholarship, health professional loan repayment, and the rural physician, pharmacist, and midwife scholarship program.

The refund or re-enrollment options offered to eligible students expire on June 30, 1995. An emergency clause is attached.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** available

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

This bill will allow those students who served in Persian Gulf to be able to continue their educational programs, which were interrupted by their deployment, without being financially penalized because they had to abruptly withdraw from courses or programs. It is a good way to honor those who served their country in this effort.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** Representative Ballard, sponsor; Keith Sherman, Veterans Legislative Coalition (pro)