

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## ESSB 6585

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As Reported By House Committee On:  
Higher Education  
Appropriations

**Title:** An act relating to tuition exemptions for veterans.

**Brief Description:** Extending tuition exemptions for Vietnam and Persian Gulf veterans.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Bauer, Oke and Roach).

**Brief History:**

Reported by House Committee on:  
Higher Education, February 25, 1994, DPA;  
Appropriations, February 28, 1994, DPA(APP w/o HE)s.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended. Signed by 16 members: Representatives Jacobsen, Chair; Quall, Vice Chair; Brumsickle, Ranking Minority Member; Sheahan, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Basich; Bray; Carlson; Casada; Finkbeiner; Flemming; Kessler; Ogden; Orr; Rayburn; Shin and Wood.

**Staff:** Susan Hosch (786-7120).

**Background:** The governing boards of the state's public higher education institutions may exempt veterans of the Vietnam conflict who served in Southeast Asia from the payment of any increase in student tuition and fees. The veteran shall not be required to pay more than the total amount of tuition and fees paid by veterans of the Vietnam conflict on October 1, 1977. To qualify for the exemption, the veteran must have been on active service between August 5, 1964, and May 7, 1975. Additionally, the veteran must be a resident of Washington and must have enrolled in a state higher education institution on or before May 7, 1990. This exemption expires June 30, 1995.

Students who were enrolled in Washington State institutions of higher education on or after August 2, 1990, and whose academic work was interrupted by deployment in the Persian Gulf combat zone, are entitled to either a refund of tuition and fees for that academic term or shall be readmitted for

one academic term without being subject to additional tuition or fees. The refund and re-enrollment benefits for Persian Gulf War veterans expires on June 30, 1995.

An additional tuition exemption exists which exempts Persian War veterans from tuition increases after August 1, 1990, if the veteran could have qualified as a Washington resident on August 1, 1990, and if the veteran can demonstrate financial need. The sunset date for this exemption is June 30, 1994.

**Summary of Amended Bill:** The tuition and fees exemption for Vietnam veterans and Persian Gulf veterans is extended to June 30, 1997. The re-enrollment option for Persian Gulf veterans is also extended to June 30, 1997. In addition, if an institutional governing board decides to grant the exemption, the board may waive all or a portion of the tuition increases that occur after October 1, 1977, for Vietnam veterans and August 2, 1990, for Persian Gulf veterans.

**Amended Bill Compared to Engrossed Substitute Bill:** If an institutional governing board decides to grant an exemption from tuition increases to a veteran of the Vietnam conflict or the Persian Gulf combat zone, the board may waive all or a portion of the tuition increases that occur after October 1, 1977, for Vietnam veterans and August 2, 1990, for Persian Gulf veterans.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** Benefits paid to veterans under the Montgomery GI Bill are not adequate to cover current educational costs. In addition, soldiers are required to contribute part of their pay towards the benefits. Many soldiers do not participate in the program because they cannot afford the required monthly contributions. The state tuition exemptions are needed by those state residents who gallantly served their country in war.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Witnesses:** Chuck Lawrence, Veterans Legislative Coalition (pro); Joe Johnston, Paralyzed Veterans of America (pro); and Stevan M. Dilworth, Student (pro).

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**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS**

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended by Committee on Appropriations and without amendment by Committee on Higher Education. Signed by 26 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Valle, Vice Chair; Silver, Ranking Minority Member; Carlson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appelwick; Ballasiotes; Basich; Cooke; Dellwo; Dorn; Dunshee; G. Fisher; Foreman; Jacobsen; Lemmon; Leonard; Linville; H. Myers; Peery; Rust; Sehlin; Sheahan; Stevens; Talcott; Wang and Wolfe.

**Staff:** Sherie Story (786-7142).

**Summary of Recommendation of Committee on Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee on Higher Education:** Additional requirements are placed on Vietnam and Persian Gulf veterans in order to qualify for reduced tuition rates. The additional requirements begin with the fall term of 1994 and include: (a) students must remain continuously enrolled for at least seven quarter credits, or their equivalent, except summer term, and not including community service courses; (b) students must have an income level that does not exceed Washington State's median family income; and (c) Vietnam veterans must have exhausted any federal educational benefits.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** None.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Witnesses:** None.