

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5397

As Reported By House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to residency status for students at institutions of higher education.

Brief Description: Granting resident status at institutions of higher education for active duty personnel stationed in Washington and their spouses and dependents.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Sheldon, Prince, Winsley, Bauer, Drew and Oke).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Higher Education, March 30, 1993, DPA.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 18 members: Representatives Jacobsen, Chair; Quall, Vice Chair; Brumsickle, Ranking Minority Member; Sheahan, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Basich; Bray; Carlson; Casada; Finkbeiner; Flemming; Kessler; J. Kohl; Mielke; Ogden; Orr; Rayburn; Shin; and Wood.

Staff: Susan Hosch (786-7120).

Background: The level of tuition required of active duty military personnel, their spouses, and their dependents has been debated in the Legislature a number of times. In 1971, when the statutes defining resident and nonresident students were consolidated, the nonresident differential was waived for active duty military and other groups. In 1982, the waiver of the nonresident fee differential was repealed for the military as a means of generating additional state general fund revenue. Projected revenue did not materialize, and in 1984, the waiver was reenacted.

Upon the recommendation of the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the 1992 Legislature made all tuition waiver programs permissive and variable and required that the institutions reduce foregone revenue from waivers by 6.6 percent. Institutions may choose to reduce the number of waivers granted or they may choose to continue granting the same

number of waivers and reduce the dollar amount of each waiver granted. The community college system chose to grant partial waivers to all students in all waiver categories. Each of the four-year institutions has developed its own methodology for meeting the waiver reduction requirement.

Summary of Amended Bill: For the purposes of determining tuition rates, active duty military personnel and their spouses and dependents are considered to be resident students. However, they are not eligible to participate in state funded financial aid programs.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The amendments clarify the definition of resident students. The clarification attempts to ensure that only resident students are eligible to participate in state funded financial aid programs.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Over the years, Washington has been home to millions of military personnel and their families. These citizens are active participants in the lives of their communities. They volunteer their time in hospice care centers, PTAs, schools, and community sports programs. They also spend countless hours assisting other residents when natural disasters strike. Military families pay taxes that support colleges and universities, so they should be able to pay the same rate other taxpayers enjoy. Military personnel cannot advance without education, so for them, additional schooling is a necessity. Although they receive some tuition assistance, the amount available is not enough to cover the cost of nonresident tuition. The Department of Defense contributes more than \$5 billion annually to Washington's economic base. Forty-four other states permit military families to pay resident tuition rates. The other states do not have a large military presence.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: (In favor) Senator Betti Sheldon, prime sponsor, Senator Eugene Prince; Representative Paul Zellinski; David Robert, Leah Ritchie, Mike Stephenson and Maria Luttrell, United States Navy/Bremerton Campus; Colonel Virgil Stone, Jan Vance, Jerry Owens and Kathleen Connolly, United States Army/Ft. Lewis; Edward Isaacson, Tom Anderson, and Terry Ogilvie, United State Air Force/McChord; and Chuck Lawrence, Veteran's Coalition. (In favor with concerns) Scott Morgan, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.