

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESSB 6585

AS PASSED SENATE, FEBRUARY 14, 1994

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)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6585 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Rinehart, Chairman; Quigley, Vice Chairman; Bauer, Bluechel, Cantu, Gaspard, Hargrove, Hochstatter, Ludwig, McDonald, Moyer, Pelz, L. Smith, Snyder, Spanel, Sutherland, Talmadge, West, Williams and Wojahn.

Staff: Michael Groesch (786-7715)

Hearing Dates: February 7, 1994; February 8, 1994

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

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 reenrollment 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:

The tuition and fees exemption for Vietnam veterans and Persian Gulf veterans is extended to June 30, 1997.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested

TESTIMONY FOR:

As a point of reference regarding the fiscal impact of the bill, the community college system will be \$600,000 per year in foregone tuition revenue.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Scott Morgan, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

HOUSE AMENDMENT(S):

The tuition exemptions for Vietnam and Persian Gulf veterans may apply to all or a portion of the relevant tuition increases. Veterans receiving exemptions must be enrolled for seven or more quarter credits per term. For Vietnam veterans receiving exemptions, the veteran's adjusted gross family income must not exceed Washington State's median family income and the veteran must have exhausted all entitlement for federal vocational or educational benefits conferred by virtue of their military service.