

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1520

As Reported By House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to the nonresident tuition fees differential.

Brief Description: Exempting career federal civil service employees and their families from the nonresident tuition fees differential.

Sponsors: Representatives Clements, Skinner, Carlson, O'Brien, Wensman and Costa.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/13/97, 2/20/97 [DP].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Carlson, Chairman; Radcliff, Vice Chairman; Mason, Ranking Minority Member; Kenney, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Butler; Dunn; O'Brien; Sheahan and Van Luven.

Staff: Suzi Morrissey (786-7120).

Background: Under current law, non-resident students pay significantly higher tuition rates than those paid by resident students. With some exceptions, before a person is entitled to pay resident tuition rates, the student or the student's parents or guardian must have established and maintained a permanent home or "domicile" in the state for at least one year before the student enrolls in college. This permanent home must have been established for purposes other than paying resident tuition rates. In order to show an institution that a person has established a permanent home in Washington, he or she may have to present evidence to the institution. That evidence may include a Washington driver's license, voter registration card, rent receipts, car license, employment information, location of a checking account, and the like.

Under residency laws, a distinction is made between persons who are financially independent and those who are still dependent on their parents for financial support. With some exceptions, a dependent student's status is based on the residency status of the student's parents or legal guardian. The residency status of a financially independent student is based on the student's own circumstances.

One exception to the domicile requirements was adopted in 1993. The exception granted resident student status to the spouse and dependents of active duty military personnel stationed in Washington. These residents do not need to live in the state for a year or prove that Washington is their permanent home. With some exceptions, if a Washington resident moves out of state, he or she loses the right to pay resident tuition rates.

Institutions of higher education have the option of waiving all or a portion of the non-resident tuition differential for various types of non-resident students. These include teaching assistants, research assistants, and institutional employees working half-time or more; active-duty military personnel stationed in the state; certain types of immigrant refugees and their spouses and dependents; domestic exchange students; and the dependents of Washington's congressional delegates. Institutions may also waive the non-resident tuition differential for reciprocity students and a limited number of international students attending community colleges.

Summary of Bill: The public baccalaureate institutions and the community colleges may waive the non-resident tuition differential for any career federal civil service employee who is assigned to a duty station in Washington and the spouse and dependent children of the employee.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Some federal civil servants move from duty station to duty station in much the same manner as members of the military. When they move to a federal job in Washington, they are required to wait for one year before they or members of their families are eligible to pay resident tuition rates. This waiting period has caused a hardship for the children of some civil servants. Some have had to delay their college plans because they could not afford non-resident tuition rates. Federal employees should enjoy the same access to waivers as active duty military, college employees, and immigrant refugees.

Testimony Against: Many people move into the state for employment. Most who do so face the one year waiting period before they or their families are eligible to pay resident tuition rates. The problems caused by the one year waiting period should be addressed through a change in the residency laws rather than through the waiver process.

Testified: Representative Jim Clements, prime sponsor (pro); and Scott Morgan, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (con).