

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESB 5330

As Reported By House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to resident tuition for active duty military personnel.

Brief Description: Treating active military personnel as residents for purposes of higher education tuition.

Sponsors: Senators Brown, Goings, Franklin, Patterson, Eide, B. Sheldon, Winsley, Costa, Oke, Bauer and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 3/30/99, 3/31/99 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill
(As Amended by House Committee)

- Defines active duty military personnel as residents for tuition-paying purposes at institutions of higher education.
- Deletes the current provision allowing institutions to waive all or a portion of the nonresident tuition differential for active duty military personnel.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Carlson, Republican Co-Chair; Kenney, Democratic Co-Chair; Lantz, Democratic Vice Chair; Radcliff, Republican Vice Chair; Dunn; Edmonds; Esser and Gombosky.

Staff: Sherie Story (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, the statutes defining resident and nonresident students were consolidated; the nonresident

differential was waived for active duty military and other groups. In the early 1980s, the tuition waiver programs were reviewed to determine whether or not to continue those not based on financial need. In 1982, the waiver of the nonresident fee differential was repealed for the military as a means of generating additional general fund revenue.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. 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 granting the variable and permissive waivers.

In 1993, the Legislature included in the definition of "resident student" the spouses and dependents of active duty military personnel stationed in Washington -- thus allowing them to pay tuition and fees at the resident student level. At that time, the active duty military personnel remained in the nonresident category and remained eligible for the permissive and variable waiver of the nonresident tuition differential.

Summary of Amended Bill:

Active duty military personnel are defined as residents for tuition-paying purposes at institutions of higher education. The current provision allowing institutions to waive all or a portion of the nonresident tuition differential for active duty military personnel is deleted.

Amended Bill Compared to Engrossed Bill: A provision is added defining active military duty stationed in the state as residents for tuition-paying purposes at institutions of higher education.

The provision requiring institutions to waive the lesser of the nonresident tuition fee differential and that portion of nonresident tuition fees which exceeds federal education assistance is deleted.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: The original purpose of this bill was to make one common policy for military personnel across the state and to make that policy consistent with the one for spouses and dependents of military personnel. Under the current optional waiver policy, the institutions charge a variety of rates. This bill would take the military out of the optional waiver policy and make the rates consistent. The changes in the amended version were intended to maximize the receipt of federal dollars, but the original bill is the preferable version.

Testimony Against: By giving higher education opportunities to military, our country has a better educated military. And this is a way to reward and thank the military for their service. Soldiers currently pay about \$60 at Pierce College; under the engrossed bill, soldiers would pay \$150. The bill as amended would require soldiers to pay more than they are paying now. The original bill is a much better policy. We support the original bill.

Testified: (In support) Senator Lisa Brown, prime sponsor.

(Opposed) Jan Vance, I Corps and Fort Lewis Education; Lieutenant Colonel Melanie Reeder, Public Affairs Officer, Fort Lewis; and George Durrie, Eastern Washington University.

(Concerns) Terry Ogilvie, McChord Air Force Base.