

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5002

As Amended by House, April 5, 2007

Title: An act relating to tuition waivers for veterans' families.

Brief Description: Changing tuition waivers for families of fallen veterans and national guard members.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Hewitt, Pflug, Honeyford, Swecker, Morton, Stevens, Parlette, Delvin, McCaslin, Schoesler and Sheldon).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 1/22/07 [DPS].

Passed Senate: 2/02/07, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5002 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Shin, Chair; Kilmer, Vice Chair; Delvin, Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Schoesler and Sheldon.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: Currently, higher education institutions are permitted to reduce all or a portion of tuition for certain types of students and for various purposes, including a child and/or the surviving spouse of an eligible military veteran or National Guard member who lost his or her life or became totally disabled, is a prisoner of war, or became missing in action while engaged in active federal military or naval service. Eligible veteran or National Guard members are those that are Washington domiciliaries.

The federal Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program provides funds for education and training to eligible dependents of certain veterans, including veterans who, in the line of duty, died, are permanently and totally disabled, are missing in action, or captured.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Higher education institutions may continue to reduce all or a portion of tuition for military or naval veterans who did not serve on foreign soils or in international waters. State higher education institutions must waive all tuition and fees for the children and spouses of eligible veterans or National Guard members who died, are permanently and totally disabled, are missing in action, or are prisoners of war. To be eligible, a child must be a Washington domiciliary between the age of 17 and 26. A surviving

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spouse, to be eligible, must be a Washington domiciliary, it must have been 10 years or less since the loss, and must not have remarried. Each recipient's continued eligibility is subject to the school's satisfactory progress policy.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 15, 2007.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The families of fallen or missing soldiers are underappreciated. It is impossible to put a value on this sacrifice, but this is a small step in the right direction. The state will pick up the price of the waivers, not the institutions.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Hewitt, prime sponsor.

House Amendment(s): Clarifies that the granting of mandatory tuition waivers for qualifying spouses and children does not affect the permissive waivers available to veterans who did not serve on foreign soil or international waters.