

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SB 5720

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### As Passed House - Amended:

April 1, 2009

**Title:** An act relating to tuition waivers for stepchildren of veterans and national guard members.

**Brief Description:** Including stepchildren in tuition waivers for children of veterans and national guard members.

**Sponsors:** Senators Hewitt, Hobbs, Brandland and Shin.

### Brief History:

#### Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 3/13/09, 3/20/09 [DPA].

#### Floor Activity

Passed House - Amended: 4/1/09, 97-0.

### Brief Summary of Bill (As Amended by House)

- Defines "child" to include a biological, adopted, or step child for purposes of the tuition waiver for children of eligible veterans and National Guard members who died or became totally disabled as a result of active service or who are missing in action or prisoners of war.
- Clarifies the definition of "totally disabled" for purposes of this tuition waiver.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Wallace, Chair; Sells, Vice Chair; Anderson, Ranking Minority Member; Schmick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Angel, Carlyle, Driscoll, Grant-Herriot, Haler and White.

**Staff:** Cece Clynch (786-7195)

### Background:

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

Public higher education institutions must waive all tuition and fees for the children of eligible veterans or National Guard members who died or became totally disabled as a result of serving in active military service or are missing in action or prisoners of war. To be eligible, a child must be a Washington domiciliary between the age of 17 and 26.

"Totally disabled" for purposes of this waiver is defined in two different places in the statute. First, it is defined by reference to another Washington statute which provides that the term "means a person who has become totally and permanently disabled for life by bodily injury or disease, and is thereby prevented from performing any occupation or gainful pursuit." Elsewhere in this waiver statute, the same term is defined to mean "a person who has been determined to be 100 percent disabled by the federal Department of Veterans Affairs."

The fees which must be waived include all assessments for costs incurred as a condition of a student's full participation in coursework and related activities. Students receiving the waivers may attend full- or part-time but, in no case, may the waivers exceed 200 quarter credits or the semester equivalent. A recipient's continued eligibility is subject to the school's satisfactory progress policy.

Tuition waivers for graduate students are encouraged but not required.

Every two years, the governing boards of institutions of higher education must report on the use of tuition waivers for veterans and National Guard members. The first report is due November 15, 2010.

**Summary of Amended Bill:**

For purposes of this waiver: "child" is defined to mean a biological child, adopted child, or stepchild.

The reference to a second, separate statutory definition of "totally disabled" is stricken, leaving a single definition of the term. "Totally disabled" means "a person who has been determined to be 100 percent disabled by the federal Department of Veterans Affairs."

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date of Amended Bill:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

None.

**Persons Testifying:** None.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.