

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1706

As Reported by House Committee On: Higher Education

Title: An act relating to authorizing waivers of building fees and services and activities fees for certain military service members.

Brief Description: Authorizing waivers of building fees and services and activities fees for certain military service members.

Sponsors: Representatives Stanford, Zeiger, Reykdal, Haler, Tarleton, Hayes, Sells, Stambaugh, Klippert, Smith and Gregerson; by request of State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/11/15, 2/13/15 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows the public institutions of higher education to waive building fees and services and activity fees for those military service members eligible to participate in the United States Department of Defense Tuition Assistance Program.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Hansen, Chair; Pollet, Vice Chair; Zeiger, Ranking Minority Member; Haler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Gregory, Hargrove, Holy, Reykdal, Stambaugh, Tarleton and Van Werven.

Staff: Megan Mulvihill (786-7304).

Background:

United States Department of Defense Tuition Assistance Program.

The United States Department of Defense Tuition Assistance Program offers up to 100 percent tuition assistance for those members of the U.S. Armed Forces who wish to take

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college courses during their off-duty hours. Members of the Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force on active duty status may receive tuition assistance depending on their service branch's eligibility and application requirements. The National Guard, Coast Guard, and Army Reserve members on federal active duty status are also eligible. There may be additional tuition assistance eligibility requirements depending on the branch, such as a time-in-service requirement.

Tuition assistance can be used for qualifying courses and degree programs from two-year and four-year institutions. The standard tuition assistance is 100 percent, not to exceed \$250 per semester credit hour or \$166 per quarter credit hour, up to a total of \$4,000 per fiscal year. An eligible U.S. Armed Forces member may receive tuition assistance up to a combined total of 130 semester hours for undergraduate credit and 39 semester hours of graduate credit. In 2014 the federal government changed the program so tuition assistance only covers tuition. Fees, books, supplies, or programs beyond a master's degree are not covered. The tuition assistance is paid directly to the institution.

Summary of Bill:

The governing boards of the public institutions of higher education may waive all or a portion of building fees and service and activity fees for military service members eligible to participate in the United State Department of Defense Tuition Assistance Program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) In May 2014 the federal government changed their regulations for the United State Department of Defense Tuition Assistance Program. Tuition assistance will no longer cover building fees and service and activity fees. This bill helps make sure that people do not fall through the cracks and gives some flexibility at the state level by allowing the institution to pick up where the tuition assistance leaves off. This is extremely important to maintain a partnership and help veterans who have decided to transition into higher education.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Stanford, prime sponsor; Alison Grazzini, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; and Antonio Sanchez, Central Washington University.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.