

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SHB 2009

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, March 28, 2017

Title: An act relating to providing higher education support for gold star families.

Brief Description: Providing higher education support for gold star families.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Reeves, Stonier, Riccelli, Peterson, Doglio, Jinkins, Kilduff, Lovick, Tarleton, McBride, Ormsby, Stanford, Orwall, Muri, Slatter, Ryu and Fey).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/03/17, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 3/16/17, 3/28/17 [DP-WM].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides a \$500 annual textbook stipend to children and spouses receiving a tuition waiver because their parent or spouse passed away, became totally disabled, or is considered a prisoner of war or missing in action due to active military service.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Wilson, Chair; Bailey, Vice Chair; Palumbo, Ranking Minority Member; Frockt.

Staff: Evan Klein (786-7483)

Background: State law requires and authorizes public institutions of higher education to grant various tuition and fee waivers. The institutions are limited in their tuition and fee waiver authority in that the total amount of tuition and fee revenue waived, exempted, or reduced may not exceed a percentage of their estimated gross operating fee revenue.

The public institutions of higher education are required to waive undergraduate tuition and fees for children and spouses of an eligible veteran or National Guard member, who as a result of serving:

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- lost their life;
- became totally disabled; or
- is considered a prisoner of war (POW) or missing in action (MIA).

In order to be eligible for the tuition waiver, a child must be domiciled in Washington and be between the ages of 17 and 26. The spouse or domestic partner must be a Washington domiciliary, not have remarried or entered into another domestic partnership, and must use the tuition waiver within ten years of the date of death, disability, or determination of POW or MIA status.

The child or spouse may receive a tuition waiver until they have earned 200 quarter credits, or the equivalent of semester credits.

Summary of Bill: A \$500 annual stipend for textbooks and course materials is provided to recipients of tuition waivers received because the recipient's spouse or parent lost their life, became totally disabled, or is considered a POW or MIA due to serving in active duty military or the National Guard.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The cost of higher education is skyrocketing for families. Family members of service members are concerned about being able to afford the cost of higher education. The \$500 stipend amount is comparable to the college bound book stipend amount.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Kristine Reeves, Prime Sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.