

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5826

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, February 16, 2017

Title: An act relating to eligibility for veteran or national guard tuition waivers.

Brief Description: Concerning eligibility for veteran or national guard tuition waivers.

Sponsors: Senators Hobbs, Zeiger, O'Ban, Conway, Fain, Keiser, Hunt and Saldaña.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 2/16/17 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Removes language from definition of "eligible veteran or national guard member" to ensure certain persons in support roles are not inadvertently excluded.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Staff: Evan Klein (786-7483)

Background: Subject to the limitations on the total amount of operating fees that each Washington institution of higher education may waive, the institutions of higher education may waive all or a portion of tuition and fees for an eligible veteran or National Guard member. An eligible veteran or National Guard member is a Washington domiciliary who was on active or reserve duty in the United States armed forces, or a National Guard member called to active duty who served in a war or conflict fought on foreign soil or in international waters and, if discharged from service, was discharged honorably.

Washington institutions of higher education may also waive tuition for veterans or National Guard members who did not serve on foreign soil, in international waters, or in another

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location in support of those serving on foreign soil or international waters, but the institution receives no state general fund support for these waivers.

Summary of Bill: Language is removed from the definition of "eligible veteran or national guard member" to ensure that the definition includes all Washington domiciliaries who:

- were active or reserve members of the military, Navy, or National Guard; and
- were called to active duty; and
- served in active service in a war or conflict fought on foreign soil or in international waters; or
- served in support of those serving on foreign soil or in international waters; and
- if discharged from service, had an honorable discharge from service.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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 on Draft Bill: PRO: National Guard members go to college with a dual role as citizen soldiers. The law was originally not very clear, and two new National Guard members entered an institution and did not receive tuition waivers. This bill clarifies language to ensure that similar student National Guard members do not lose their tuition waivers in the future. The National Guard is always on a rotational basis with deployment. This bill gives these members a piece of mind where while they are stationed at home.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Hobbs, Prime Sponsor.

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