
College & Workforce Development Committee

SB 5545

Brief Description: Concerning survivor benefits.

Sponsors: Senators Wagoner, Conway, Dhingra, Lovick, Mullet, Short and Wilson, J..

Brief Summary of Bill

- Modifies the mandatory tuition waiver for spouses and domestic partners of eligible veterans and National Guard members who lost their lives in service, became totally and permanently disabled, or are determined to be prisoners of war or missing in action.

Hearing Date: 2/21/22

Staff: Megan Mulvihill (786-7304).

Background:

Washington Military Tuition Waiver.

Higher education institutions may waive all or a portion of tuition and fees for an eligible veteran or National Guard member, subject to limitations. An eligible veteran or National Guard member is a Washington resident 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.

Higher education institutions must waive all tuition and fees for:

- a child and the surviving spouse or domestic partner of an eligible veteran or National

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Guard member who became totally disabled as a result of active service, or who is a prisoner of war; and

- a child and the surviving spouse or domestic partner of an eligible veteran or National Guard member who lost their life as a result of serving in active duty.

The surviving spouse or domestic partner of the eligible veteran or National Guard member has 10 years from the date of the event to receive benefits.

Summary of Bill:

The tuition waiver for surviving spouses and domestic partners of eligible veterans or National Guard members is modified in two ways:

- the 10 year time period for which the person must use the waiver begins based on whichever qualifying event occurs last; and
- Federal determination of service-connected death or total disability is added to the list of events which qualifies a person for the waiver.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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