

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5614

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As of January 12, 2022

**Title:** An act relating to the Washington national guard postsecondary education grant program.

**Brief Description:** Concerning the Washington national guard postsecondary education grant program.

**Sponsors:** Senators Randall, Holy, Conway, Das, Kuderer, Lovick, Mullet, Padden, Stanford and Wilson, C.; by request of Military Department.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Higher Education & Workforce Development: 1/13/22.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Eliminates the requirement that a National Guard member has not achieved a baccalaureate degree or higher.
- Adds a requirement that a National Guard member be enrolled in courses or programs that lead to a postsecondary degree or credential.
- Modifies the maximum grant to not exceed the maximum Washington college grant and additional stipulations.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Staff:** Alicia Kinne-Clawson (786-7407)

**Background:** Washington State National Guard Conditional Scholarship Program. The Washington State National Guard Conditional Scholarship program was created in 1994, and is administered by the Office of the Adjutant General of the State Military Department. It provides scholarships to eligible members of the Washington National Guard who continue their service after receiving funds.

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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 part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

The scholarship is in the form of a loan that is forgiven if the recipient completes the requisite service time in the Washington National Guard. For each academic year of credit a student receives scholarship money, the student must remain an active or participating member for 12 additional months. Scholarship recipients who do not fulfill the service obligation are required to repay the loaned funds plus 8 percent interest. Scholarship recipients must complete courses at institutions of higher education located in Washington State that are accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges. The student's goal must be a degree or certificate program. The student must maintain a 2.5 cumulative grade point average and individual course grades of 2.5 or better.

The federal Montgomery G.I. Bill provides education benefits that may be used while on active duty or after separation from active duty and by members of the Selected Reserve of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard, and the Army and Air National Guard. Eligibility criteria and benefits vary depending on the type and date of enlistment and on the nature of the educational program. Approved training programs under the Montgomery G.I. Bill include degree programs, certificate or correspondence courses, cooperative training, independent study programs, apprenticeship or on-the-job training, and vocational flight training programs.

Washington College Grant. The maximum Washington College Grant (WCG) award covers tuition, and services and activities fees for 15 quarter credits or the equivalent at the state's public institutions. For example, the 2021-22 maximum award for students attending the University of Washington is \$11,339.

**Summary of Bill:** Eligibility. Eligibility for the Washington National Guard postsecondary education grant program is modified to require that students are enrolled in courses or programs that lead to a postsecondary degree or credential. The requirement that a student has not achieved a baccalaureate or higher degree is eliminated.

Grants. Eligible students may receive grants to pay for postsecondary education program costs. Grants may not:

- exceed the maximum WCG award, plus \$500 for books and supplies;
- exceed the student's cost of attendance, when combined with other sources of aid; or
- result in a reduction of the participant's federal or other state aid.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 11, 2022.

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

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