

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1943

As of February 12, 2024

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

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

Sponsors: Representatives Leavitt, Jacobsen, Ryu, Rule, Christian, Couture, Bronoske, Slatter, Chambers, Reeves, Reed, Graham, Timmons, Orwall, Paul, Riccelli and Shavers.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/9/24, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 2/16/24.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Adds spouses and dependents as designated by guard members as eligible recipients of the Washington National Guard Postsecondary Education Grant Program.
- Expands eligibility for the grant program to up to six years or 150 percent of program length.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Alicia Kinne-Clawson (786-7407)

Background: The Washington National Guard Postsecondary Education Grant Program (Program), formerly the National Guard Conditional Scholarship Program, is administered by the Office of Student Financial Assistance (Office). The Office selects participants with the assistance of the Washington Military Department. To be eligible for the Program, an active drilling member of the Washington National Guard who is in good standing must:

- attend an institution of higher education located in the state and accredited by the

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- Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges or an institution in the state that provides approved training under the Montgomery GI Bill;
- be enrolled in courses or a program that lead to a postsecondary degree or certificate;
 - submit an application for student aid approved by the Office;
 - be a resident student; and
 - meet any additional selection criteria adopted by the Office.

Participants receive grants to help pay for postsecondary education program costs for up to five years or 125 percent of the published length of the program, or the credit or clock-hour equivalent. Participants incur an obligation to repay the grant, with interest, unless they serve in the Washington National Guard for one year for each year they received the grant. Grants may not result in a reduction of federal or other state financial aid and may not exceed:

- the cost of attendance when combined with all other public and private grants, scholarships, and waiver assistance;
- the maximum Washington College Grant, plus \$500 for books and supplies; or
- the annual cost of undergraduate tuition fees and services and activities fees at the University of Washington, plus an allowance for books and supplies.

Summary of Bill: Eligible participants in the Washington National Guard postsecondary education grant program are expanded to the spouse or dependent of a an active drilling guard member. The guard member must designate their spouse or dependent and agree to fulfill his or her service obligation. A dependent is defined as a person enrolled as a dependent in the Defense Enrolment Eligibility Reporting System. To be eligible for the Program, a designated spouse or dependent must:

- be enrolled in a course or program leading to a degree or certificate at an institution of higher education located in the state and accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges or an institution in the state that provides approved training under the Montgomery GI Bill;
- submit an application for student aid approved by the Office;
- be a resident student; and
- meet any additional selection criteria adopted by the Office.

Guard members incur an obligation to repay the grant, with interest, unless they serve in the Washington National Guard for one year for each year they or their spouse or dependent received the grant. Grant eligibility is extended to six years or 150 percent of the published length of the program in which the participant is enrolled or the credit or clock-hour equivalent. The Office must adopt rules for an appeals process for guard members who do not render service necessary to satisfy their service obligation under the Program.

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.