
Prepared by: Matt Stayner
Reviewed by: Laurie Byerly, Sheila Baker, Monica Brown, Paul Siebert
Date: 2/14/12

Measure Description:

Extends certain rights and benefits to members of commissioned corps of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Requires community colleges to provide a tuition waiver for the children and spouses of a member of the Armed Forces who died on active duty or was 100 percent disabled and died as a result of the disability.

Government Unit(s) Affected:

Department of Administrative Services (DAS), Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development, Department of Human Services (DHS), Oregon Health Sciences University (OHSU), Oregon University System (OUS)

Summary of Expenditure Impact:

Please see Analysis

Local Government Mandate:

This bill does not affect local governments' service levels or shared revenues sufficient to trigger Section 15, Article XI of the Oregon Constitution.

Analysis:

The rights and benefits extended to members of commissioned corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration have no fiscal impact to the state. The required community college tuition waver creates an indeterminate fiscal impact due to the use of the phrase "died on active duty" since this includes service members who may have been killed in action as well as any other cause of death.

For prior versions of the bill, the Community Colleges and Workforce Development Department (CCWD) made a significant assumption that the bill would require tuition waivers for the surviving spouses and children of Oregon veterans that were killed in action, with a nominal addition for survivors of service members who died as a result of disability. Based on this assumption, the CCWD, using data from the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs and the 2010 U.S. Census estimates that there are 132 eligible spouses and 248 eligible children of Oregon servicepersons that were killed in Iraq and Afghanistan (based on the assumption of one spouse and two children for each). CCWD also assumes that 25% of the spouses and children will attend a community college; the spouses within the next four years and the children within the next ten years, with an even annual distribution of each. Based on an average annual tuition of \$3,663, and assuming tuition costs do not increase, the estimated total tuition waived would be \$52,945 in the 2011-13 biennium and \$211,780 in the 2013-15 biennium.

The inclusion of the phrases "died on federal active duty" or "died on active duty" provide a much broader pool of service members than the previous erroneous assumption of "killed in action". So while the estimates above are a subset of the total, the total fiscal impact may be significantly higher since it would include the surviving spouses and children of service members who died on active duty, regardless of cause of death. The number of Oregon service members who have died on active duty was not readily available from the ODVA and the US Department of Veterans' Affairs.

This portion of the bill carries roughly the same language as Senate Bill 1066A of the 2008 special session (chapter 39, Oregon Laws 2008) as modified by Senate Bill 595 of the 2009 regular session (chapter 236, Oregon Laws 2009) that provides this waiver for the Oregon University System (OUS).

The Chancellor's Office noted that OUS has waived over \$1 million in tuition since the inception of the program.