

STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Veterans and Emergency Preparedness

Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact

Revenue: No Revenue Impact

Action Date: 05/19/15

Action: Do Pass With Amendments To The B-Eng Measure And Requesting Subsequent Referral To Education Be Rescinded. (Printed C-Eng.)

Meeting Dates: 05/05, 05/19

Vote:

Yeas: 4 - Boquist, Monnes Anderson, Olsen, President Courtney

Prepared By: Cheyenne Ross, Committee Administrator

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires public universities to give eligible veterans and servicemembers, and their dependents, enrollment priority over other students. Permits community colleges to establish priority enrollment system. Provides minimum requirements for priority enrollment system. Applies to new and continuing students on or after September 15, 2016.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Encouraging use of military educational benefits
- Time limit on use of military educational benefits
- Possibility of extending priority enrollment to include veterans' and servicemembers' family members
- Possibility of extending to narrower group of dependents such as surviving spouses and children of deceased or disabled veterans

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

Extends priority enrollment to include veterans' and servicemembers' dependents.

BACKGROUND:

The Post-9/11 GI Bill education benefits cover tuition equal to the highest public university tuition rate in each state, for 36 months of full-time enrollment. Additionally, a stipend for housing is provided equal to an E-5 pay grade with dependents (on the military enlisted pay scale) during all periods of full-time enrollment. At present, the 36-month entitlement may be billed for placement exams, or developmental or remedial classes before the student is qualified to enroll in a full-time program.

California, Illinois and Wisconsin, have all passed legislation establishing priority enrollment for qualified veterans at public universities. House Bill 2645-C gives eligible veterans and servicemembers, and their dependents, priority enrollment at public universities, and at community colleges that have established a priority enrollment system.