

SB 1032 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs

Action Date: 03/23/23

Action: Do pass with amendments. Refer to Ways and Means by prior reference. (Printed A-Eng).

Vote: 5-0-1-0

Yeas: 5 - Linthicum, Manning Jr, President Wagner, Thatcher, Woods

Exc: 1 - Gorsek

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

Prepared By: Beverly Schoonover, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 3/16, 3/23

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Establishes a higher education grant program for spouses and dependents of active Oregon National Guard members who have completed at least six years of service, and who are eligible to continue to serve an additional six years or more. Specifies grant program requirements and directs the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to adopt rules and calculate grant award amounts for the program. Allowable grant expenses include tuition; some fees and a book allowance for community college; undergraduate and certain certification programs; and public and private universities in Oregon. Allows Guard members to designate more than one recipient for this program, but only designate one recipient at a time, and specifies that the cumulative grant amount cannot exceed a total of four years of resident tuition charges, fees, and allowances. Requires the HECC to adopt rules and limit eligibility based on annual grant award calculations.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Existing education benefits program for Guard members
- Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits
- Possible retroactive education benefits

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Removes the requirement that the National Guard members must be full-time residents of the state for their dependent or spouse to qualify for the grant program. Makes allowances for applicability at private post-secondary institutions.

BACKGROUND:

The Oregon National Guard was established in 1903 and its members are equipped and trained to respond to natural and man-made emergencies. The Oregon National Guard State Tuition Assistance program offers active members funding for undergraduate tuition, fees, and books, at eligible Oregon post-secondary institutions. This program does not currently include education funding for spouses or dependents.

Senate Bill 1032 A establishes a new education program through the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) for spouses and dependents of eligible Oregon National Guard members. To qualify, Guard members must have served at least six years in the guard and be eligible to serve another six years or more in the Guard. Qualifying members may designate a dependent 26 years of age or under or a spouse to receive grant funding.