

SB 1032 -1, -2 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

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

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

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 of more. Specifies grant program requirements and directs the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to adopt rules and calculate grant award amounts for the program.

NOTE - Measure has subsequent referral to Committee on Ways and Means

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

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

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Removes the requirement that the National Guard members must be a full-time resident of the state for their dependent or spouse to qualify for the grant program.

FIS:

RIS: No revenue impact on measure w/the -1 amendment

-2 Makes allowances for applicability at private post-secondary institutions.

FIS: Fiscal statement issued on measure w/the -2 amendment

RIS: No revenue impact on measure w/the -2 amendment

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 postsecondary institutions. This program does not currently include education funding for spouses or dependents.

House Bill 1032 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. Funding will pay for tuition, some fees and a book allowance for community college, undergraduate and certain certification programs, and public universities in Oregon. Guard members may designate more than one recipient for this program, but may only designate one recipient at a time, and the cumulative grant amount cannot exceed a total of four years of resident tuition charges, fees, and allowances. The measure requires the HECC to adopt rules and limit eligibility based on annual grant award calculations.