

HCS HB 1078 -- TUITION GRANTS

SPONSOR: Jackson (Cunningham, 145)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Veterans by a vote of 11 to 0.

This substitute allows the spouse and children of a soldier who is killed in action after September 11, 2001, or who becomes 80% disabled as the result of an injury sustained in combat action after September 11, 2001, to receive an educational grant for tuition at a public or private college or university in Missouri. The Coordinating Board of Higher Education can award up to 25 grants annually. If the waiting list of eligible survivors exceeds 50, the board can ask the General Assembly to increase the number of grants it is authorized to award. The tuition grant cannot exceed what is charged a resident by the University of Missouri-Columbia. The veteran must have been a Missouri resident at the time of death or injury in order for his or her survivors to receive this grant. In addition to the full cost of tuition, the grant includes \$2,000 per semester for room and board and the actual cost of books up to \$500 per semester.

Children are eligible to receive the scholarship until age 25. Spouses are eligible until age 45. No eligible student will receive a grant for more than 100% of tuition when combined with similar funds given to the student.

The provisions of the substitute will expire six years from the effective date.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Effect on General Revenue Fund of an income of \$0 to a cost of \$270,275 in FY 2007, an income of \$0 to a cost of \$283,800 in FY 2008, and an income of \$0 to a cost of \$298,000 in FY 2009. No impact on Other State Funds in FY 2007, FY 2008, and FY 2009.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill will allow any surviving spouse or child of a veteran killed or injured in action after September 11, 2001, to receive a scholarship to any college or university in Missouri. The family of a deceased veteran receives very little monetary compensation and the state has an obligation to help them. Currently, 25 Missourians have been killed in action since September 11, 2001. A very limited number of people will be eligible for this assistance, so the cost shouldn't be prohibitive.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Cunningham (145); Marine Corps League, Department of Missouri; Military Officers Association of America, State Council; Missouri Association of Veterans Organizations; American Legion, Department of Missouri;

Missouri National Guard Association; Missouri Veterans Commission; and Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Missouri Department.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Alice Hurley, Legislative Analyst