

HCS SCS SB 830 -- MISSOURI RETURNING HEROES' EDUCATION ACT

SPONSOR: Coleman (Day)

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

This substitute establishes the Missouri Returning Heroes' Education Act which requires all public higher education institutions which receive state funds appropriated by the General Assembly to limit the tuition charged to combat veterans for undergraduate studies to \$50 per credit hour. To qualify, a veteran must have been a Missouri resident when first entering the military, must have honorably served in armed combat after September 11, 2001, and must maintain at least a 2.5 grade point average on a 4.0 scale. Eligibility for the reduced tuition will expire 10 years from the date of the veteran's discharge. The veteran and the institution must report to the Coordinating Board of Higher Education within the Department of Higher Education any other eligible financial assistance, and the veteran cannot receive more than the actual cost of attendance from all assistance.

The substitute allows an institution to report to the board the amount of tuition waived in the previous year and include that data in its request for appropriations for the following year.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2009, FY 2010, and FY 2011.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that many veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan are having trouble paying for their education. The bill makes state schools sacrifice a little tuition for those who have sacrificed a lot.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Coleman; and Bob Weber.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill provided information regarding the fiscal impact of the bill on certain institutions.

Testifying on the bill was University of Central Missouri.