

HB 1984 -- TUITION BENEFITS FOR VETERANS, MILITARY PERSONNEL, AND THEIR DEPENDENTS

SPONSOR: English

This bill exempts honorably discharged veterans, military personnel, and their dependants from the payment of specified tuition, fees, and charges. The bill requires the governing board of each approved public institution of education to exempt all honorably discharged men and women of the United States Armed Forces and the Missouri National Guard and the dependents of persons who died or became totally disabled while in service of the United States Armed Forces and the Missouri National Guard from the payment of tuition, dues, fees, and other required charges. Persons seeking the exemption must currently reside in this state and must have entered the service at a location in this state and declared this state as the person's home of record.

The fee exemption does not include general deposit fees, student services fees, and any fees or charges for lodging, board, or clothing.

The bill specifies that the governing board of each approved public institution of education must exempt a dependent child or stepchild of a member of the United Armed Forces who is a resident of the state or is entitled to resident tuition for any semester or other academic term the member of the United States Armed Forces is deployed on active duty for a combative military operation outside of the United States. He or she will receive the exemption for a cumulative total of 150 credit hours.

The bill specifies an applicant claiming the exemption must submit an application of exemption and satisfactory evidence that he or she is qualified for the exemption no later than one year after the institution notifies the applicant as specified in the bill. The exemption will not apply to an individual that is entitled to receive educational benefits under federal legislation at the time of registration if the federal benefit is equal to or exceeds the fees. If the federal benefit is less than the amount of fees he or she is eligible to receive both benefits for a combined amount not to exceed the costs of tuition and fees for the time period.

The governing board of an approved public institution may enter into a contract with the United States government, or any of its agencies, to provide instruction to ex-servicemen and ex-servicewomen at a tuition rate which covers the estimated cost of the instruction or at a tuition rate of \$100 a semester. If the rates specified are prohibited by federal law for any particular class of ex-servicemen or ex-servicewomen, the tuition rate will be

set by the governing board, but must not be less than the established rate for civilian students. If federal law requires a class of veterans to have the tuition payments deducted from subsequent benefits that the veteran may be entitled, the institution must refund the veteran the amount that any adjusted compensation payment is reduced because of tuition payments made to the institution by the federal government for the veteran.

The Coordinating Board for Higher Education in the Department of Higher Education must prescribe procedures to allow an individual or his or her spouse, conservator, guardian, custodian or other legal caretaker of the child to transfer any unused portion of the maximum cumulative credit hours to his or her child.

To be eligible to receive the exemption the child must be a resident of the state as specified in the bill, maintain satisfactory academic progress as determined by the institution, and must be 25 years old or younger on the first day of the semester or academic term the exemption is claimed. The board must prescribe procedures for a child who suffered a severe illness or debilitating condition that caused him or her not to use the exemption before reaching the maximum age.