

Chapter 73

VETERAN'S TUITION WAIVER

Original House Bill No. 76

AN ACT relating to veterans; providing for free tuition at the University of Wyoming and community colleges for overseas combat veterans and combat veteran surviving spouses and orphans; providing definitions; requiring a report; providing an appropriation; and providing for an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Wyoming:

Section 1. W.S. 19-14-106(a) by creating new paragraphs (iii) through (v), (c) and by creating new subsections (d) and (e) is amended to read:

19-14-106. Free tuition and fees for education of war orphans and veterans; definitions.

(a) As used in this section:

(iii) "Academic year" means the twelve (12) month period beginning with the commencement of the fall semester for the University of Wyoming and with the commencement of the summer semester for community colleges;

(iv) "Combat veteran surviving spouse or orphan" means a person who is a surviving spouse or orphan of any overseas combat veteran when the overseas combat veteran was a resident of Wyoming for at least one (1) year prior to entering active service and the overseas combat veteran died during active service. For purposes of this paragraph, a child is a combat orphan only if he was under twenty-one (21) years of age at the time his parent died in overseas combat during active service;

(v) "Overseas combat veteran" means a person other than a Vietnam veteran who was a resident of Wyoming for at least one (1) year prior to entering into active service, who is an honorably discharged veteran who served in the military service of the United States and who was awarded the armed forces expeditionary medal or other authorized service or campaign medal indicating service to the United States in any armed conflict in a foreign country.

(c) The University of Wyoming and each community college shall provide free tuition for not more than ten (10) semesters for any Vietnam veteran not presently receiving education benefits under the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, as amended, overseas combat veteran or combat veteran surviving spouse or orphan for any credit ~~or vocational education~~ course for which the Vietnam veteran, overseas combat veteran or combat veteran surviving spouse or orphan registers. In order to continue to receive free tuition, the overseas combat veteran or combat veteran surviving spouse or orphan shall earn a cumulative 2.0 grade point average by the end of the third semester of enrollment, shall maintain a 2.0 grade point average after the third semester of enroll-

ment and shall otherwise remain eligible as provided in this section. No overseas combat veteran or combat veteran surviving spouse or orphan shall be eligible for free tuition under this subsection for any semester commencing after eight (8) academic years following the initial receipt of the free tuition under this subsection. No overseas combat veteran shall be eligible for free tuition under this section for any semester commencing more than ten (10) academic years after the veteran's completion of military service. Except for good cause as defined in rules and regulations of the community college commission, no combat orphan shall be eligible to apply for his first semester of free tuition under this section more than three (3) academic years after the graduation date of the student's high school class or, for a student with a general equivalency diploma or who was home schooled, the high school graduation date of students of the same age.

(d) The community college commission shall reimburse the University of Wyoming and each community college for the costs of tuition provided under this section. If insufficient funds are appropriated, the reimbursement shall be proportionally reduced based on tuition expenses. The commission shall promulgate rules for the implementation of the free tuition pursuant to subsection (c) of this section, including the reimbursement to the university and community colleges.

(e) The community college commission shall submit to the joint appropriations and the joint education interim committees by October 1, 2006, a report identifying the actions taken and monies expended pursuant to this act and shall submit the report annually thereafter on October 1.

Section 2. There is appropriated from the general fund to the community college commission two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000.00) for reimbursement to the University of Wyoming and the community colleges to cover the free tuition authorized under this act. The community college commission may take an administrative fee, not to exceed five percent (5%), to administer and disburse the funds pursuant to this act. Notwithstanding W.S. 9-4-207(a), any unexpended funds appropriated under this section shall not revert to the general fund at the end of the biennium.

Section 3. This act is effective immediately upon completion of all acts necessary for a bill to become law as provided by Article 4, Section 8 of the Wyoming Constitution.

Approved March 23, 2006.