

HCS HB 111 -- TUITION GRANTS FOR VETERANS' SURVIVORS

SPONSOR: Day (Cunningham, 145)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Special Committee on Veterans by a vote of 10 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 will award up to 25 grants annually. If the waiting list of eligible survivors exceeds 50, the board can request 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 Cost on General Revenue Fund of \$319,600 in FY 2008, \$329,325 in FY 2009, and \$339,550 in FY 2010. No impact on Other State Funds in FY 2008, FY 2009, and FY 2010.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill gives a little help to those people whose parents and spouses have given the ultimate sacrifice while serving their country. The bill should be expanded to include any member of the military who was killed on active duty, not just those killed in combat.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Cunningham (145); and Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Missouri Department.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.