

HCS SCS SB 75 -- COLLEGE TUITION FOR COMBAT VETERANS

SPONSOR: Coleman (Day)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Special Committee on Veterans by a vote of 9 to 0.

This substitute requires all higher education institutions which receive state funds to limit the amount charged for tuition to combat veterans for undergraduate studies to 25% of the current credit hour rate or \$100 per credit hour, whichever is less. To qualify, a veteran must have been a Missouri resident prior to his or her service, must have served in a combat area 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.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2008, FY 2009, and FY 2010.

PROPONENTS: 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 sacrificed a lot more.

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

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that the program needs to be administered by the Department of Higher Education and be subject to appropriations. If the program is administered by the department, it will need more employees.

Testifying on the bill were the University of Missouri; University of Central Missouri; and Department of Higher Education.