

HCS HB 400 -- MISSOURI RETURNING HEROES ACT

SPONSOR: Basye

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Veterans by a vote of 13 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 8 to 1.

Currently, the Missouri Returning Heroes Act caps undergraduate tuition at \$50 per credit hour before federal and state aid for combat veterans that served after September 11, 2001, that were residents of Missouri before entering service at public institutions of higher education for 10 years after a honorable discharge.

This bill would expand the act to include combat veterans that served prior to September 11, 2001 and combat veterans who are eligible to register to vote in Missouri, registered to vote in Missouri, or are current Missouri residents.

Additionally, this bill would place a cap of 30% on tuition and fees for qualified combat veterans pursuing graduate degrees for a period of 20 years after a honorable discharge.

This bill also makes it so the cap may be applied before all federal and state aid is applied to tuition, at the combat veteran's discretion.

This bill is similar to HCS HB 1368 (2018).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this bill would offer financial assistance to veterans pursuing graduate degrees at public universities in Missouri. Additionally, supporters claimed that this bill would incentivize veterans to move to Missouri to attend public universities and would assist public universities if they are experiencing a shortage of students.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Basye; Phillip Bacon; and Erik J. Anthes.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.