

Senate Executive Departments and Administration Committee

Phil Jasak 271-1403

SB 45, relative to national guard educational benefits.

Hearing Date: January 18, 2023

Time Opened: 10:21 a.m.

Time Closed: 10:31 a.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Pearl, Carson, Gendreau, Perkins Kwoka and Altschiller

Members of the Committee Absent : None

Bill Analysis: This bill allows eligible national guard members to transfer their national guard tuition waiver benefit to their spouse to be used in a degree-enhancing curriculum in the university system of New Hampshire.

Sponsors:

Sen. Carson

Sen. Watters

Sen. Birdsell

Rep. Ladd

Rep. Moffett

Who supports the bill: Senator Sharon Carson (SD 14), Sen. David Watters (SD 4), Kevin Grady (NHSVAC), Cathy Provencher (USNH), Major General David Mikolaities (NHNG), Warren Perry (NHNG)

Who opposes the bill: None

Who is neutral on the bill: None

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Senator Carson:

- Senator Carson said that this bill would allow eligible National Guard members to transfer their educational benefits to their spouse. She then added that this is a recruitment tool and if the member is not interested in college, then it will allow their spouse to attend a state 4-year college or university with their benefits.

Major General David Mikolaities in favor:

- Major Gen. Mikolaities said that 2022 was the worst year of National Guard recruitment ever in New Hampshire. He added that this bill is a recruitment and retention tool that is the first concrete benefit given to a spouse. He then clarified that the education waiver can be used by the National Guard member or their spouse.

Kevin Grady State Veteran Advisory Committee in favor:

- Mr. Grady said that the Veterans Advisory Committee voted unanimously in support of this bill for its expansion to the 4-year state university system. He then added that transferring this benefit to spouses will allow people in their mid-twenties to put down roots in NH, which benefits both the national guard and the State of NH.
- Senator Gendreau asked if there is an opportunity to extend the benefit to children of National Guardsmen.
 - Mr. Grady responded that the Guard doesn't want to compete against itself by giving the benefit to children and therefore not incentivizing them to join the Guard also.
 - Maj Gen. Mikolaities then added that 80% of military recruits come from military families therefore giving it to the child of a Guardsman would reduce recruitment in the long term.

Cathy Provencher Chief Administrative officer for the State University System in favor:

- Ms. Provencher said that the University System is in full support of this bill. She added that the State University System has already provided benefits of 2.6 million dollars in tuition waivers to over 7,000 National Guardsmen and women in just the last academic year.