

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Authors: Brod and others

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Analyst: Jim Cleary, 651-296-5053

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Overview

A provision in the omnibus state government finance bill of 2001:

- (1) raised from 75% to 80% the state support level for the National Guard's tuition and textbook reimbursement program, applicable for the greater majority of participating student-soldier members of the Guard (and from 50% to 80% for a small number of medical student members of the Guard);
- (2) required a report on the effect of this support-level increase by March 1, 2003; and
- (3) provided a sunset for the provisions in (1) and (2) above, scheduled for June 30, 2003.

House File 1080 proposes to delete the reporting requirement in (2) above and the sunset provision in (3) above. It would leave intact the 80% state support level for the program.

Note:

Currently, there are approximately 2,600 Minnesota National Guard members who are higher education students who participate in the tuition reimbursement program. Approximately another 320 Guard members were participating in the program when recently ordered into active military service for the war with Iraq or for peacekeeping assignments elsewhere. The DMA is expecting about 2,900 participants during FY04/05. Currently, there are just over 12,000 members of the Minnesota Army and Air National Guard. Under current Minnesota law, members of other military reserve units are not eligible for this program.

Most states now have some such post-secondary education assistance program to enable them to compete in recruiting students into their National Guards. Support

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levels among the states generally range from about 50 percent to 100 percent of tuition costs at public colleges and universities. The Minnesota National Guard program's support level is set as a percentage of the cost of tuition for lower division programs in the college of liberal arts at the twin cities campus of the University of Minnesota. However, participating members of the Guard may attend either public or private institutions.