

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Overview

This bill would broaden eligibility for the National Guard reenlistment bonus program to include certain officers of the Guard. Currently, only enlisted members of the National Guard can qualify for a reenlistment bonus under this program. The bill would allow anyone who is being commissioned as an officer to also qualify for the bonus.

Section

- 1 Reenlistment bonus program.** Broadens eligibility to allow for payment of the bonus to a person who is accepting commissioning as an officer in the Minnesota National Guard. Currently, eligibility for the bonus is limited to enlisted personnel only.

It appears that the bill would allow payment of a commissioning bonus to a person irrespective of whether the person has had any prior military service.

- 2 Tuition (and textbook) Reimbursement Grant Program.** Adds authority under this program to pay up to 25 postsecondary educational grants of \$1,000 each per year, with grants being awarded on a competitive basis to eligible members of the Minnesota National Guard.

No limitations are specified regarding the division of these grants among officers and enlisted personnel.

Note:

Section

The five branches of the military are stratified into two major classes: enlisted personnel and officers.

(a) *Enlisted personnel* comprise the lower strata of military ranks, which range from E1 to E9. *Enlisted personnel* join the military by *enlisting*, and sometimes by *reenlisting*, for a specific number of years of duty, whether in the regular active component of the military, or in the reserve component (consisting of the National Guard and other Reserves). Under current Minnesota Statutes, only *enlisted personnel* in the Minnesota National Guard have been eligible to receive a state reenlistment bonus (for which funding is appropriated by the Legislature).

(b) *Officers* comprise the higher military ranks, which range from O1 to O10. To join the military as an officer, a person must apply for a *commission* and, if accepted, the person is *commissioned* into the military for an indefinite period of time. Depending upon the person's commissioning contract and a variety of possible changes of status along the way, an officer may serve in regular active duty, active reserve duty, or inactive reserve status until the person either voluntarily or involuntarily retires or resigns his or her commission. Thus, a person neither *enlists* nor *reenlists* as an officer in the military.

However, occasionally in any branch of the military, an *enlisted person* is recognized for outstanding leadership qualities and is offered a temporary or permanent *commission* as an officer. Under current Minnesota law, such persons *are not* eligible for the reenlistment bonus. The bill would change that situation, by authorizing payment of a commissioning bonus to a person upon acceptance of a commissioning as an officer in the National Guard.

However, the language of the bill also appears to allow payment of a commissioning bonus to a person irrespective of whether the person has had any prior military service.