

FISCAL NOTE
Requested by Legislative Council
01/26/2017

Bill/Resolution No.: HCR 3022

- 1 A. **State fiscal effect:** *Identify the state fiscal effect and the fiscal effect on agency appropriations compared to funding levels and appropriations anticipated under current law.*

	2015-2017 Biennium		2017-2019 Biennium		2019-2021 Biennium	
	General Fund	Other Funds	General Fund	Other Funds	General Fund	Other Funds
Revenues						
Expenditures						
Appropriations						

- 1 B. **County, city, school district and township fiscal effect:** *Identify the fiscal effect on the appropriate political subdivision.*

	2015-2017 Biennium	2017-2019 Biennium	2019-2021 Biennium
Counties			
Cities			
School Districts			
Townships			

- 2 A. **Bill and fiscal impact summary:** *Provide a brief summary of the measure, including description of the provisions having fiscal impact (limited to 300 characters).*

HCR 3022 encourages the State Board of Higher Education (SBHE) to provide specific, tailored financial aid counseling to veterans receiving education benefits under the GI Bill.

- B. **Fiscal impact sections:** *Identify and provide a brief description of the sections of the measure which have fiscal impact. Include any assumptions and comments relevant to the analysis.*

The North Dakota University System currently provides financial aid counseling to all students. The costs for additional staff time to research and create a publication explaining GI bill benefits are negligible.

3. **State fiscal effect detail:** *For information shown under state fiscal effect in 1A, please:*

- A. **Revenues:** *Explain the revenue amounts. Provide detail, when appropriate, for each revenue type and fund affected and any amounts included in the executive budget.*
- B. **Expenditures:** *Explain the expenditure amounts. Provide detail, when appropriate, for each agency, line item, and fund affected and the number of FTE positions affected.*
- C. **Appropriations:** *Explain the appropriation amounts. Provide detail, when appropriate, for each agency and fund affected. Explain the relationship between the amounts shown for expenditures and appropriations. Indicate whether the appropriation or a part of the appropriation is included in the executive budget or relates to a continuing appropriation.*

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Date Prepared: 02/01/2017

2017 HOUSE GOVERNMENT AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

HCR 3022

2017 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Government and Veterans Affairs Committee Fort Union, State Capitol

HCR 3022
2/9/2017
28118

- Subcommittee
 Conference Committee

Committee Clerk Signature

Carmen Hart

Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

Urging the State Board of Higher Education to develop a policy and procedures for providing specific, tailored financial aid counseling to recipients of education benefits under the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, as amended, and to include in the counseling comparisons of those education benefits to other aid packages and financing options available to the recipients

Minutes:

Chairman Kasper opened the hearing on HCR 3022.

Rep. Corey Mock introduced the resolution. The enhanced Post 911 GI Bill was passed in 2013. GIs can also transfer their GI benefits to a dependent which they could use at a post-secondary institution. An example was Chancellor Hagerott's son who had the GI benefits and also scholarships. He had exhausted the GI benefits first and wanted to go back into a master's program. Had he had counseling that understood what benefits, scholarships, or financial aid was available to him at the beginning, he could have better planned how he was going to use his GI benefits through the course of his education. This resolution simply requests that the State Board of Higher Education include counseling services with GI Bill recipients as they are charting their course in how they use financial aid.

Rep. Laning: Would you expect that there would be some additional cost in implementing this?

Rep. Mock: No. There are financial aid counseling services already at state institutions. We are asking that we are making sure that students know this is available, and if they are receiving those benefits, there is an invitation or an encouragement for them to receive some counseling with letting them know that they do not have to use all the benefits if they want to go to a graduate level program.

Rep. P. Anderson: Are any of these current counseling services face to face, or is any of it web based?

Rep. Mock: This doesn't speak to the style of counseling. I would leave it up to the State Board of Higher Education to effectively get this information to the students.

Rep. P. Anderson: I am talking about existing financial counseling. With our 11 institutions it is only a face to face meeting?

Rep. Mock: I shouldn't speak on that. I know that the Higher Ed. office is here.

Rep. Rohr: Shouldn't the CVSC people be aware of this too? The local county veterans' groups?

Rep. Mock: You are correct. I was surprised that this was sent to this committee, because it is primarily written to work with the State Board of Higher Education. I believe veterans' organizations would be very supportive of additional counseling and services so that their veterans or dependents and spouses of veterans know how they can best utilize the benefits through their terms of service.

Rep. Rohr: Should this resolution be amended to include them?

Rep. Mock: We could consider ways to engaging Veterans' Affairs. The ones that may be best suited to explain the benefits and how it applies to the education would be the institution itself. We want to make sure that they are balancing all the different sources of income so it works out best for that student.

Rep. B. Koppelman: Do they currently have a list of those students who are eligible for the GI bill?

Rep. Mock: I can't speak for Higher Education. I am certain Higher Ed. knows the students that are using the benefits, and I imagine they would also know the students that have or will be eligible to use the benefits.

Chairman Kasper: All of the information on benefits for veterans is currently out there someplace. Correct?

Rep. Mock: I believe so. We already employ as a state with the State Board of Higher Education financial aid counselors. Are they getting that information that directly applies to this one benefit that the government provides and that we authorize as a state, so that student is best utilizing that service and not leaving other financial aid, grants, or scholarships on the table?

Chairman Kasper: If information is there and their job is to counsel, do you see areas where they are not doing this counseling to the extent they should?

Rep. Mock: The example Chancellor Hagerott brought up would be happy to share that story with you. There may not be instances where it is happening on a regular basis. Again, the purpose of the bill was stated.

Chairman Kasper: Have you been contacted by any veteran in the state of North Dakota that felt they were not advised about all the benefits that they should have been able to take?

Rep. Mock: I believe this is one of those instances where most people don't know what they don't know. If they have the GI bill and they are getting their degree, they have the benefits, apply for it, and they are used. They may have not sought out additional scholarships and grants, or they didn't think when they were discharged from the military that they would go and get their degree and then want additional education. That would explain why we haven't heard specific examples of how the institutions aren't failing to provide this counseling service. We want to prevent it and make sure that they do know what is available and make that informed decision themselves.

Neutral:

Brenda Zastoupil, North Dakota University System, appeared in a neutral position. All the institutions in the state strongly promote that trends education and support any program that can provide a benefit to the individuals who are seeking education following their service. Sometimes the financial aid offices are the point of contact for these individuals. Sometimes they are not. Some campuses don't have the resources to solely house an area that would look at and counsel all the veterans on a campus. Financial aid can be very intimidating and confusing finding one, and then you throw in the veterans' benefits on top of that, it gets very confusing even for us as financial directors in trying to disseminate all that and a little bit of intimidating as well for us to counsel individuals. The North Dakota State Association of State Financial Aid Administrators does seek out education from the State VA Office on the benefits that these individuals can seek after their service as they are contemplating their continuing education and formulating some type of a program whether or not it is a brochure from the financial aid offices and those directors to hand off. I don't think that would be anything that would be looked negatively upon at all, anything that can provide a benefit to those individuals as well as a means for us as the financial aid directors to counsel those individuals appropriately, because it can be confusing for us as well. The financial aid directors, financial officers, and the institutions look for the funding so those individuals do not have to take out student loans. We try to hold down that loan debt as much as possible. VA benefits are one of those that if you see that money in front of you, you are going to gravitate toward it.

Chairman Kasper: Is it not now under the job description of your financial aid people across the system to be able to have all the information available to any student who walks into their office and asks for assistance in the types of assistance that is available?

Brenda Zastoupil: Absolutely. We do have the veterans' benefits, and there is a list of different programs that can be handed off even to family members. I envision this as possibly a brochure that puts it in one spot. We do have the information on who those individuals are, and that can be provided whether electronically or in person. It is another tool for our offices to assist them.

Chairman Kasper: Why do we need a resolution to tell you how to properly do your job that you are just telling us you already have that information available and should be disseminating it?

Brenda Zastoupil: I was providing information to the committee. We do this already. I don't think it is a negative thing, though, to have any additional information that we can provide.

Chairman Kasper: Obviously, this resolution is not negative, but it is in your job description already. Why do we want to clog our system with a resolution to tell you to do your job that you are already doing?

Rep. Laning: Do you get a full list of GI bill eligible students every term? How do you get that?

Brenda Zastoupil: They have to make known to the institution that they are a veteran and seeking benefits and then the institutions have to certify the enrollment for those veterans. They go through the system and, yes, those individuals are monitored.

Rep. Rohr: Are you just talking about all public institutions?

Brenda Zastoupil: This refers to the public institutions. I believe statewide, though, the financial aid offices and all institutions try to look at options for students so that they don't have to take out loan funding whatever that might be.

Rep. Rohr: Both public and private financial officers can attend the conferences of the North Dakota Financial Aid Association?

Brenda Zastoupil: Correct.

Rep. C. Johnson: Do you think Chancellor Hagerott's incident was an isolated incident, or have you heard of any other situations where that has happened?

Brenda Zastoupil: I haven't heard of that. I don't know what the veterans do in their exit interviews.

Chairman Kasper closed the hearing.

Chairman Kasper: I recognize the good intent of this resolution, and I agree with everything in it. I believe the university system is already doing everything that they are supposed to and have the capability to do it. This is a sort of feel good resolution. It doesn't hurt if we pass it, but if it is already being done, what do we need it for?

Rep. B. Koppelman: I get the impression that they have all the tools they need to do this. I make a motion for a DO NOT PASS on HCR 3022.

Rep. Rohr seconded the motion.

Rep. Dockter: When I was in the National Guard and came back and started school, they had their clerk there that helped you, and the state institutions know how the tuition waiver and how the GI bill and benefits works.

Rep. Rohr: At the private institution where I work, we have a financial aid officer, but they also hired a part time person who visits with the veterans to counsel them on the various packages that are available. I support the do not pass.

Rep. Vetter: I didn't see any evidence that said it is a problem.

Rep. Laning: When I got out of the service some time ago, I didn't get any counseling of any kind on GI bills, and I assume the transferable thing wasn't even available. It does sound like it has gone a long distance from when I got out. I am glad to hear there is a lot of counseling available.

Rep. Karls: Your dependents are also eligible?

Chairman Kasper: If you don't use them. The vote on this resolution has nothing whatsoever to do with the support of this committee for veterans and all the benefits that they are eligible for. This just has to do with a thought that this may not be needed and redundant.

A roll call vote was taken. 11 Yeas, 2 Nays, 1 Absent.

Rep. Dockter will carry the bill.

Date: 2-9-17
 Roll Call Vote #: 1

**2017 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE
 ROLL CALL VOTES
 BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 3022**

House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee

Subcommittee

Amendment LC# or Description: _____

Recommendation: Adopt Amendment
 Do Pass Do Not Pass Without Committee Recommendation
 As Amended Rerefer to Appropriations
 Place on Consent Calendar
 Other Actions: Reconsider _____

Motion Made By B. Koppelman Seconded By Rohr

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Jim Kasper-Chairman	X		Pamela Anderson		X
Scott Louser-Vice Chairman	A		Mary Schneider		X
Jason Dockter	X				
Craig A. Johnson	X				
Daniel Johnston	X				
Karen Karls	X				
Ben Koppelman	X				
Vernon Laning	X				
Christopher D. Olson	X				
Karen M. Rohr	X				
Vicky Steiner	X				
Steve Vetter	X				

Total (Yes) 11 No 2

Absent 1

Floor Assignment Dockter

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HCR 3022: Government and Veterans Affairs Committee (Rep. Kasper, Chairman)
recommends **DO NOT PASS** (11 YEAS, 2 NAYS, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING).
HCR 3022 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.