

BOARD OF REGENTS BRIEFING PAPER

Fee Waiver for Recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor

June 9, 2023

BACKGROUND & POLICY CONTEXT OF ISSUE:

Existing law (*Nevada Revised Statutes* 396.544, 396.5442, 396.5443, and 396.5445) authorizes the Board of Regents to grant a waiver of registration and certain other fees to certain persons, such as members of the Nevada National Guard; the children and surviving spouses of such members who are killed in the line of duty; the spouse or dependent of a person who is identified as a prisoner of war or missing in action while performing his or her duties as a member of the Armed Forces of the United States; and recipients of the Purple Heart. These fee waivers were adopted by the Board of Regents and appear in *Title 4, Chapter 17*, which not only includes these provisions and others approved by the legislature and signed into law by the Governor, but also establishes additional fee waivers that do not appear in statute but were approved solely by action of the Board, such as the Foster Youth Fee Waiver.

During the March 9-10, 2023, Board of Regents meeting, Regent Donald Sylvantee McMichael, Sr. requested a waiver of tuition and fees be provided for Medal of Honor recipients. The Congressional Medal of Honor is the United States' highest award for military valor in action. According to the Congressional Medal of Honor Society, there are currently 65 living Congressional Medal of Honor recipients. In an effort for the Nevada System of Higher Education to recognize and support recipients of the Armed Forces' highest award, a fee waiver is proposed, similar to the waiver in NRS and Board policy for recipients of the Purple Heart.

In order to be considered for the waiver, a student must provide eligibility documentation confirming their veteran status and award of the Congressional Medal of Honor. To receive the waiver, the student must file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and provide documentation of any Veterans Administration educational benefits for which they are eligible. The waiver is applied against the balance of registration fees, laboratory fees, and other mandatory fees after any veteran education benefits and Title IV federal grant and aid. In addition, a waiver recipient shall be deemed a bona fide resident for tuition purposes.

SPECIFIC ACTIONS BEING RECOMMENDED OR REQUESTED:

Approval to revise *Title 4, Chapter 17* to create a new section that provides a waiver of registration fees, laboratory fees, and other mandatory fees to eligible Congressional Medal of Honor recipients and deems them bona fide residents for tuition purposes.

IMPETUS (WHY NOW?):

During the March 9-10, 2023, Board of Regents meeting, Regent Donald Sylvantee McMichael, Sr. requested a waiver of tuition and fees be provided for Congressional Medal of Honor recipients.

CHECK THE NSHE STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL THAT IS SUPPORTED BY THIS REQUEST:

- Access (Increase access to higher education)**
- Success (Improve student success)**
- Close Institutional Performance Gaps**
- Workforce (Meet workforce needs in Nevada)**
- Research (Increase solutions-focused research)**
- Coordination, Accountability, and Transparency (Ensure system coordination, accountability, and transparency)**
- Not Applicable to NSHE Strategic Plan Goals**

INDICATE HOW THE PROPOSAL SUPPORTS THE SPECIFIC STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL

Providing fee waivers for Congressional Medal of Honor recipients promotes access for the integration of members and veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces into higher education. Earning an academic credential will provide these men and women the skills and knowledge necessary to integrate into civilian life post-military career.

BULLET POINTS TO SUPPORT REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

- The proposed fee waiver for recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor is an educational benefit similar to the existing fee waiver for Purple Heart recipients (*Title 4, Chapter 17*) and recognizes the military valor of members and veterans of the U.S. Armed forces who are recipients of this highest award.
- As with other educational benefits for members and veterans of the U.S. Armed forces, the proposed fee waiver assists in the financial challenges men and women may experience as they pursue education in transition from military to civilian careers.

POTENTIAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

None have been presented.

ALTERNATIVE(S) TO WHAT IS BEING REQUESTED/RECOMMENDED:

None have been presented.

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CHANCELLOR’S OFFICE:

The Chancellor’s Office supports the proposed policy.

COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY:

- Consistent With Current Board Policy: Title # _____ Chapter # _____ Section # _____
 - Amends Current Board Policy: Title #4 Chapter #17 Section #new 15
 - Amends Current Procedures & Guidelines Manual: Chapter # _____ Section # _____
 - Other: _____
 - Fiscal Impact: Yes No _____
- Explain: While there will be a fiscal impact, the cost of implementing this policy depends upon the number of eligible students who choose to enroll at an NSHE institution, which cannot be accurately projected. According to the Congressional Medal of Honor Society, the repository for tracking Medal of Honor recipients, there are currently 65 living recipients as of the date of this proposal.

POLICY PROPOSAL

TITLE 4, CHAPTER 17, *new* SECTION 15

Fee Waiver for Recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor

Additions appear in *boldface italics*; deletions are [~~stricken~~ and bracketed]

Section 15. Fee Waivers for Recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor

- 1. A member or veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States who is a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor shall be permitted to register without registration fees, laboratory fees, or other mandatory fees provided that the student:***
 - a. Completes the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA); and***
 - b. Provides a Certificate of Eligibility for Veterans Administration educational benefits and/or the Veterans Administration Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment benefit.***
- 2. The waiver shall be granted to a student who enrolls in a program leading to a certificate, associate, bachelor's, master's, or professional degree.***
- 3. A student to whom the fee waiver is awarded shall be deemed a bona fide resident of Nevada for tuition purposes.***
- 4. The institution may request such documentation as it deems necessary to verify the student is a member or veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States and a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor.***
- 5. The amount of the waiver must be equal to:***
 - a. If a student is entitled to receive any federal educational benefit for a semester, the balance of registration fees, laboratory fees, and other mandatory fees assessed against the student that remain unpaid after the student's account has been credited with the full amount of the federal education benefits to which the student is entitled for that semester; or***
 - b. If a student is not entitled to receive any federal education benefits for a semester, the full amount of the registration fees, laboratory fees, and any other mandatory fees assessed against the student for that semester.***
- 6. Definitions.***
 - a. For purposes of this Section, other mandatory fees include student fees,***

special course fees, and differential program fees, as defined in this chapter.

- b. Federal education benefits include federal grants awarded to the student based on completion of the FAFSA, Veterans Administration education benefits and/or the Veterans Administration Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment benefit.*

RENUMBER SECTIONS 15 THROUGH 32 AS 16 THROUGH 33