

March 2, 2000

**Assembly Bill 114 (Freese/Erpenbach)**

Tuition Remission for Survivors of Emergency Medical Personnel Killed in Line of Duty.

**Summary of Bill --**

This would expand the current UW and WTCS fee remissions to include children and surviving spouses of emergency medical technicians who are killed in the line of duty.

Assembly Amendment 1 further expands the scope to include survivors of ambulance drivers.

Fiscal effect would be minimal.

**Staff Comments --**

Do it for the kids.

**Standing Committee Action --**

Approved 8-0-3 by Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities on August 25, 1999.

**Recommended JFC Action --**

Adoption of AA 1.  
Passage of AB 114 as amended.

Prepared by: Bob



## Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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March 2, 2000

TO: Members  
Joint Committee on Finance

FROM: Bob Lang, Director

SUBJECT: Assembly Bill 114: Fee Remissions for Children and Spouses of Emergency Medical Services Technicians Killed in the Line of Duty

Assembly Bill 114 was introduced on February 9, 1999 and referred to the Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities. On August 25, 1999, that Committee adopted Assembly Amendment 1 and recommended passage of AB 114, as amended, on a vote of 8 to 0.

### BACKGROUND

Current law requires the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin (UW) System to grant full remission of fees (tuition) to any resident undergraduate student who is enrolled in a bachelor's degree program and who is the child or surviving spouse of a correctional officer, fire fighter or law enforcement officer who was killed in the line of duty in this state.

Similarly, the board of a Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) district is required to grant full remission of program fees (tuition) and materials fees to any resident student who is enrolled in a college parallel, associate degree or vocational diploma program and who is the child or surviving spouse of a correctional officer, fire fighter or law enforcement officer who was killed in the line of duty in this state.

In either case, if the student is a child of the deceased officer, he or she must have been under age 21, or not yet born, at the time the officer was killed.

The remissions were established in 1995 Act 228, and initially applied only to children of fire fighters and law enforcement officers. Act 228 required UW System institutions to also remit tuition for children of correctional officers killed in the line of duty. In 1997 Act 163, the

remissions were expanded to correctional officers' children attending WTCS institutions and to the deceased officers' surviving spouses.

The remissions are funded through separate, annual appropriations within the budgets of the UW System and the State WTCS Board. For the 1999-01 biennium, \$15,000 GPR annually is provided for the remissions for WTCS students and \$30,000 GPR annually is provided for the UW System remissions. The statutes specify that if the amount appropriated in any fiscal year is insufficient to fully fund the fee remissions, the applicable entity (the Board of Regents or the WTCS district board) is required to notify the Joint Committee on Finance.

## SUMMARY OF BILL

Assembly Bill 114 would expand the current fee remissions to include children and surviving spouses of emergency medical services technicians who are killed in the line of duty.

### Assembly Amendment 1

Assembly Amendment 1 to AB 114 would further expand the fee remissions to include children and spouses of ambulance drivers killed in the line of duty.

## FISCAL EFFECT

Initially, \$15,000 GPR annually was provided to each system to reimburse institutions for the remissions. Beginning in 1999-00, the University's appropriation was increased to \$30,000 GPR annually. The following table indicates the number of students receiving the remissions and the total value of the remissions for each year since their establishment.

	<u>1996-97</u>		<u>1997-98</u>		<u>1998-99</u>	
	<u>Students</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>
UW System	6	\$11,702	10	\$23,460	12	\$28,474
WTCS	4	6,360	3	16,184	7	18,685

As previously noted, the Joint Committee on Finance is not obligated to provide additional funds if the amount appropriated in any fiscal year is insufficient to fully fund the remissions. In such a case, tuition revenues for the underlying institutions are reduced. As indicated in the table, the value of the remissions in both systems exceeded the amounts appropriated in 1997-98 and 1998-99, and the institutions absorbed the excess costs.

AB 114 and AA 1 to AB 114 would increase the number of individuals who would be potentially eligible to receive fee remissions at UW System campuses and WTCS institutions, and therefore could result increased expenditures for the remissions. The bill would not increase the amounts appropriated for the remissions. Assuming the value of the reimbursements under current law remains stable, if additional students seek remissions as a result of the expanded eligibility under the bill, the amounts appropriated are not likely to be sufficient to fully fund the remissions. Data regarding the number of emergency medical technicians who are killed in the line of duty is not currently collected. However, anecdotal information obtained by staff of the WTCS Board indicates three to five such deaths per year. Since it is not known how many, if any, individuals would become eligible for the remissions under the bill and would choose to enroll, the actual fiscal impact of the bill on the affected UW and WTCS institutions cannot be determined.

Prepared by: Merry Larsen