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S.B. 647: FIRST ANALYSIS

Senate Bill 647 (as reported without amendment)

Sponsor: Senator Valde Garcia

Committee: Education

Date Completed: 12-4-01

RATIONALE

Increasingly, the armed forces of the United States desire top-quality recruits to design and operate their technically-advanced weapons and systems. Public schools offer a likely place to recruit smart young people; however, some strictly limit their students' exposure to the Armed Forces. Other potential employers evidently are allowed more access to students through presentations at school-sponsored career days or speeches in individual classes. Some people think that the armed forces should have the same access to students as do other employers.

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Revised School Code to provide that, if a school district or public school academy allowed employers access to school facilities or activities to address pupils about employment opportunities, the board of the school district or board of directors of the public school academy would have to allow the same access to representatives of the armed forces of the United States.

Proposed MCL 280.1319

ARGUMENTS

(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)

Supporting Argument

While higher education is an increasingly popular option for high school graduates, attending a university right after high school is not for everyone. Some students need the rigor and structure of the military; others, a chance to travel and see the world; still

others, the opportunity for hands-on learning before obtaining a bachelor's degree. Full-time employment locally does not offer the training, experience, and travel opportunities that the armed forces offer, either. It is important that the armed forces be able to present information to students that would allow them to choose an appropriate path following high school graduation.

Response: The current bill contains language pertaining only to employers, not to university recruiters. If the bill aims to allow the same access to students as employers and higher education representatives have, it should be amended to reflect this.

Opposing Argument

Presenting the armed forces as one more postgraduation option belies the reality that the military inflicts violence on others. Allowing young, impressionable adolescents too much exposure to the flashy, colorful uniforms and the enticing travel opportunities can be dangerous. There is no current shortage of recruits; any interested young person can seek out the armed forces by heading to one of the many recruiting offices in the State.

Response: Students who commit to military service must be 18 years old, an age the law currently recognizes as old enough to take responsibility for one's actions. The bill would not alter the requirement that 17-year-old recruits obtain parental permission before signing up for the armed forces. Further, the bill would not allow the armed forces unrestricted access to schools, but would ensure only the same access as employers.

Legislative Analyst: C. Layman

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FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: J. Carrasco, Jr.

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