

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

February 2, 2005 LB 96

75 percent, 50 percent? Currently, it's 75 percent, probably, on average, a pretty competitive one, in terms of what other states do, whether this is the tool that the National Guard needs to be able to recruit. Now, we can get into larger societal issues of rewarding people who are willing to serve. At this point in time, we're debating it, probably because we've had a large number of troops who have been...had to go overseas. We're worried about them. We want to do the right thing for them. I think we need to get this back into, I believe, what the context is, as a Legislature. And I think Senator Pederson is kind of getting to that. In the scheme of everything that we must do, we have to decide what this benefit is, and how it's administered, and what its purpose is. I mean, if the purposes that I've heard, one is to encourage recruitment. And that's what...every time this has come up, in increasing this, over the years that I've been in the Legislature, it is to help recruit. We're getting it now into kind of a little different category of reward for the people who have served. So we have two public policy issues here. But what it comes down to is how we structure this. I don't have a problem with it being 0 to 100 percent, and letting the department--I have a lot of confidence in the department--manage an amount of money to the best they can for the people coming in. Now, that's if this is a reward. If this is a benefit to recruit, then we really are better off saying 75 percent, so that anyone coming in would be able to say, if I do this for X number of years, I get this benefit. So with my amendment, we've kind of twisted it around to a reward. And I think it also calls up a lot of other discussion that we have in general about our scholarship programs. What kind of GPA does someone need to maintain to stay in them; where they can go to school; what...do they have to pay for any of it themselves? This would be a little different in that regard. I think we've stirred all that up, and I know that a number of people are going to work on this in the...if it moves to Select File. But I don't think anyone who has challenged the mechanics of this, or has challenged how this fits in our whole budget picture, or has challenged what we need to do to create a benefit to recruit, should be in any way labeled as disloyal or antimilitary or antiwar or whatever else you want to throw into that, with the exception of Senator Chambers, who uses these bills to talk about broader issues than