



IDAHO NATIONAL GUARD
JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS
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Attachment 3-p1



NGID-JA

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SUBJECT: HB 18 – Educational Encouragement – Quick Fact Sheet

1. What is the State Education Assistance Program (SEAP)? SEAP is a program authorized by Section 46-314, Idaho Code, that provides incentive payments to Idaho National Guardsmen for education. Qualified Soldiers and Airmen receive up to \$4,000.00 per fiscal year to attend institutions of higher education within Idaho.

2. Why is SEAP important? Both the Army and the Air Force do not make federal funds available for tuition assistance until Soldiers and Airmen complete their initial entry training, which can take up to two years. Because education is the Number One reason citizens join the National Guard, with 73% of current National Guard members say educational benefits are a significant motivating factor for joining and remaining in the military, a two year delay in receiving federal education benefits causes a significant recruiting and retention problem. Since the SEAP's initiation, 254 Soldiers and Airmen have supplemented their tuition using an initial appropriation of \$250,000.00. In addition, SEAP is important because Idaho must remain competitive with the surrounding Mountain States for recruits. Utah, Nevada, Wyoming, and Washington have 100% tuition assistance programs. Idaho's SEAP program must be as generous and inclusive as possible.

3. What is the problem?

a. Currently, Section 46-314 limits SEAP to "nontechnician national guardsmen." By excluding the technician workforce, SEAP is failing to incentivize a significant population of the IDNG. This results in an artificial, inequitable restriction. To fully understand this dilemma, one must understand the different fundamental types of "statuses" an IDNG member can be in.

b. Man-Day (M-Day) Status. M-Day status is what is what National Guard service is typically thought of. The Soldier serves one weekend per month and two weeks per year, depending on the training requirements of the unit. Soldiers in an M-Day status typically perform Inactive Duty Training (IDT) during these weekend drill periods. Most M-Day members have a full-time civilian job or are in school in addition to their military service.

c. Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) Status: AGR Soldiers are full-time Soldiers serving as "active duty" within the National Guard. Their function is of the AGR force is to ensure the effective administration, operation, and training of the National Guard.

d. State and Federal Military Technicians: There is another category of Soldier in Idaho. State and Federal Military Technicians are civilian employees who work for the Idaho Military Division to assist in ensuring the effective administration, operation, and training of the National Guard. Most State and Federal Military Technicians are "dual-status" employees, meaning that their civilian job is conditioned on maintaining good

membership in the Idaho National Guard. Military Technicians wear military uniforms to work and follow military customs and courtesies even though they are in a civilian status during the work week. Technicians may or may not be performing the same duties as they would when serving in an M-Day status. There are approximately 700 technicians within the IMD.

e. Other Statutes: There are several other statuses in which a member may serve, including Active Duty for Operational Support, Active Duty for Special Work, One-Time Occasional Tour, State Active Duty (SAD), and Title 10.

f. Soldiers serving in M-Day and AGR (and the other statuses as well) are eligible to participate in SEAP. Only technicians are ineligible. This precludes approximately 15% of the IMD from much-needed education benefits, and reduces the organization's ability to competitively retain this talented workforce. It is also inequitable. For example, an M-Day Soldier who has a lucrative full-time civilian job, and who could pay for additional civilian education, can utilize SEAP, while a similarly-situated technician cannot. Or, a full-time AGR Soldier can use SEAP, while a technician cannot. Or, a federal employee working in any other federal agency in Idaho (FBI, BLM, US Attorney, etc.) while also an M-Day Soldier can utilize SEAP, while a technician cannot.

4. **What is the fix?** The fix is simple. Removing the word "nontechnician" from Section 46-314 would eliminate this inequity, increase the IMD's ability to retain a talented workforce, and improve the readiness, education, and quality of life for the Idaho National Guard's citizen Soldiers and Airmen.

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