**LAC Proposal Form**

Thank you for your interest in helping to create the ASWWU Legislative Agenda!

The following guidelines will provide you with the information that you will need to put together your proposal to the AS Board of Directors and AS Legislative Affairs Council.

Legislative proposals should answer questions listed below under **‘considerations for presenters’** in roughly 600 words. Each proposal will be allotted a total of 20 minutes for presentation and questions from the Legislative Affairs Council.

**Proposals**

**Issue: Support for Student Veterans**

**Presenter(s): Bennett Massey-Helber**

**Endorsements: WWU’s Veteran Services Center, Washington Student Association for Ask 3**

The Veterans Service on campus serves over 500 student veterans on campus with only two full-time employees, only one of which is a state certified.... The Veterans Services does have about a dozen federal work study positions, but the nature of these positions means that they are limited in their abilities to help student veterans with the myriad of services that they require.

Unfortunately for student veterans, the Washington State programs to waive tuition for veterans and their children are very limited and restrictive. RCW 28B.15.621 restricts tuition waivers to only veterans who are “totally disabled” according to strict, constantly changing, federal VA legal definitions. Often, veterans choose to pass their benefits down to their children. However, the tuition waivers for children of these totally disabled veterans is limited to children who are 17-26, meaning that older children of disabled veterans cannot get their benefits. According to the Veterans Services Office, veterans often do not reach the 100% disability rating until after students are much older.

“The line has to do with disability rating, which some vets are only 40% disabled and therefore their children are not entitled to this waiver: [28B.15.621](https://nam03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fapps.leg.wa.gov%2Frcw%2Fdefault.aspx%3Fcite%3D28B.15.621&data=02%7C01%7CASLegislativeLiaison%40wwu.edu%7C869901db5e0d416d2def08d748189fc9%7Cdc46140ce26f43efb0ae00f257f478ff%7C0%7C0%7C637057142912054572&sdata=3VCfsmjGU509TOVI9tEBfCNKl%2F0CdoHyjTjw%2BWo0ReI%3D&reserved=0) (c) "Totally disabled" means a person who has been determined to be one hundred percent disabled by the federal department of veterans affairs

The other line has to do with age, which depending on when the veteran received their 100% rating. Often, this doesn’t happen until sometime when the child is much older than this. These ratings are hard to receive based on the time it takes to process them through the VA system; moreover, harder to keep as the VA continually changes rules around its rating system: [28B.15.621](https://nam03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fapps.leg.wa.gov%2Frcw%2Fdefault.aspx%3Fcite%3D28B.15.621&data=02%7C01%7CASLegislativeLiaison%40wwu.edu%7C869901db5e0d416d2def08d748189fc9%7Cdc46140ce26f43efb0ae00f257f478ff%7C0%7C0%7C637057142912064570&sdata=Dxw1nBXmFXObTo%2FI6jPpqmzH80RLWgvkWTeecRmSLMQ%3D&reserved=0) (a) A child must be a Washington domiciliary between the age of seventeen and twenty-six to be eligible for the tuition waiver. A child's marital status does not affect eligibility.”

Therefore, the ASWWU recommends

1. Amend RCW [28B.15.621 (8) (c)](https://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28B.15.621) to change the “totally disabled” clause to a new percentage or totally remove it, allowing more students to access veteran tuition waivers
2. Amend RCW [28B.15.621](https://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28B.15.621) and delete the line “between the ages of seventeen and twenty-six"
3. Create a state fund or budget proviso to give Western Washington University's Veteran’s Services Center an additional $100,000 per year until 2024 to allow them to hire an additional full-time staff position

**Considerations for Presenters**

* Describe the issue: What is the problem? What is the solution?
* Does it directly impact and improve students’ lives?
* Can you provide background information and the current context of the issue?
* Does it have a clear target? (e.g. a specific legislator, committee, or other agency)
* Will it strengthen and expand efforts within WSA?
* Could students build a diverse campus coalition around this issue?
* Does it have a local/state/federal organizing and lobbying angle?
* Are students at Western engaged and interested in this issue? If not, what tactics could we employ to mobilize students around this issue?

**Please be sure to ask if any questions come up regarding the issue selection process.**

**Contact Associated Students Director of Legislative Affairs: Bennett Massey-Helber at** **ASLegislativeLiaison@wwu.edu** **with any questions**

**Considerations for the Committee**

This section is comprised of questions the Legislative Affairs Council should keep in mind while considering proposals

* Is it winnable?
* Does it have a clear and realistic time frame?
* Is it likely to be debated and acted upon by the Legislature in the next year?

**Next Steps and Timeline of Proposal Proces**s

* Please arrive to the LAC meeting at which you are presenting on time, with your materials ready
* 20 minutes allotted for each presentation including questions

Fall:

* Preliminary discussion of proposals in LAC meetings
* Presentation, review and voting on legislative proposals by the Board of Directors
* Compilation of Legislative Agenda
* Crafting statements for Agenda Handouts
* Finalizing Handouts and approval by the Board of Directors