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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GENERAL,
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MEMORANDUM

To: Representative Catherine Toll, Chair, House Committee on Appropriations

From: Representative Helen Head, Chair, House Committee on General, Housing, and Military Affairs

Date: March 14, 2018

Subject: Vermont National Guard Tuition Benefit Program

The Committee expresses its support for changing the existing Vermont National Guard (Guard) educational assistance program, under which the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) provides interest-free college loans to members of the Guard, to an entitlement program, under which members of the Guard would be entitled to take college courses tuition free or with a tuition subsidy. We recommend that the entitlement program include the following elements:

- (1) Full tuition payment for Guard members to attend:
 - (A) the Community College of Vermont (CCV) at the CCV resident tuition rate;
 - (B) the other Vermont State Colleges at the Northern Vermont University resident tuition rate; and
 - (C) the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College (UVM) at the UVM resident tuition rate.
- (2) For each full academic year of attendance under the program, a member would be required to serve two years in the Guard in order to receive the full tuition benefit.

However, if the costs of the program exceed \$2 million annually, consideration would be given to requiring three years of service in the Guard for each full academic year of attendance at UVM in order to receive the full tuition benefit. Much of the Committee also supports the potential in future years to include in the program private postsecondary educational institutions.

(3) The tuition benefit would be conditioned upon the member's executing a promissory note obligating the member to repay the member's tuition benefit if the member fails to complete the period of Guard service or if the member is no longer in good standing with the Guard or is dismissed from the educational institution.

(4) To qualify for the program, the Guard member would have had to first use any post-September 11, 2001 tuition benefits and other federally funded military tuition assistance.

(5) VSAC and the Guard would report annually to the General Assembly with an assessment of the viability of the program and usage, including information pertaining to the achievement of the goals of the program and the costs of the program to date.