1	Draft Bill Language for Vermont National Guard Tuition Benefit
2	Program
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4	Sec. XXX. VERMONT NATIONAL GUARD TUITION BENEFIT
5	PROGRAM; COVID-19
6	(a) Findings and purpose.
7	(1) An eligible member of the Vermont National Guard is entitled to
8	certain tuition benefits for courses taken at Vermont postsecondary educational
9	institutions under the Vermont National Guard Tuition Benefit Program
10	(16 V.S.A. § 2857).
11	(2) One of the eligibility requirements to participate in this Program is
12	that the member must have successfully completed basic training.
13	(3) Due to safety measures implemented to address the COVID-19
14	pandemic, the number of available basic training slots has been reduced,
15	making it impossible for members who are new enlistees to complete basic
16	training prior to the fall college semester.
17	(4) The purpose of this section is to allow these new enlistees to gain the
18	benefits of the Program if they would otherwise qualify to participate in the
19	Program.

1	(b) Interim Vermont National Guard Tuition Benefit Program.
2	(1) The Interim Vermont National Guard Tuition Benefit Program
3	(Interim Program) is created solely for new enlistees who have not completed
4	basic training due solely to the reduced number of available basic training slots
5	as a result of safety measures implemented to address the COVID-19
6	pandemic. The structure, administration, and terms and conditions of this
7	Interim Program shall be otherwise identical to the Vermont National Guard
8	Tuition Benefit Program under 16 V.S.A. § 2857, except that the Interim
9	Program shall not require that a member has successfully completed basic
10	training. Eligible members under the Interim Program shall be entitled to this
11	tuition benefit for courses offered by participating postsecondary educational
12	institutions only during the fall 2020 semester.
13	(2) The sum of \$[TBD] is appropriated in fiscal year 2021 from the
14	Coronavirus Relief Fund to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation
15	(VSAC) to fund the tuition benefits under the Interim Program.
16	(c) Vermont National Guard Tuition Benefit Program waiver. For new
17	enlistees who want to use the tuition benefit under the Vermont National
18	Guard Tuition Benefit Program established under 16 V.S.A. § 2857 for the
19	spring 2021 semester and thereafter, but have not completed basic training due
20	solely to the reduced number of available basic training slots as a result of
21	safety measures implemented to address the COVID-19 pandemic, the

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1	requirement to have successfully completed basic training (16 V.S.A.
2	§ 2857(c)(2)) is waived.
3	(d) Verification of future basic training. Before funds are allocated to a
4	member under subsection (b) or (c) of this section, the Adjutant General shall
5	provide verification to VSAC that the member has a reservation for a future
6	basic training class.
7	(e) Service commitment. Academic attendance under the Interim Program
8	shall count toward the member's service commitment under the Vermont
9	National Guard Tuition Benefit Program, 16 V.S.A. § 2857(d).
10	(f) Repeal. This section is repealed on the date that the Adjutant General
11	certifies to the House Committee on General, Housing, and Military Affairs
12	and the Senate Committee on Government Operations that all members who
13	had not completed basic training due solely to the reduced number of available
14	basic training slots as a result of safety measures implemented to address the
15	COVID-19 pandemic have successfully completed, or are currently attending,
16	basic training. A copy of this certification shall be sent at the same time to the
17	Office of Legislative Counsel.
18	(g) Effective date. Notwithstanding 1 V.S.A. § 214, this section shall take
19	effect on passage and shall apply retroactively to August 17, 2020.