

H.517

An act relating to educational benefits for members of the military and their families and eligibility for election to serve as Adjutant and Inspector General

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

* * * Vermont National Guard Tuition Benefit Program * * *

Sec. 1. 16 V.S.A. § 2857 is amended to read:

§ 2857. VERMONT NATIONAL GUARD TUITION BENEFIT PROGRAM

(a) Program creation. The Vermont National Guard Tuition Benefit Program (Program) is created, under which a member of the Vermont National Guard (member) who meets the eligibility requirements in subsection (c) of this section is entitled to the following tuition benefit for up to full-time attendance:

(1) For courses at ~~either campus of the Northern Vermont University (NVU), the Vermont Technical College (VTC), the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College (UVM), or at the Community College of Vermont (CCV)~~ any Vermont State College institution or the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College (UVM), the benefit shall be the in-state residence tuition rate for the relevant institution.

(2) For courses at a ~~Vermont State College, other than NVU, VTC, or CCV, or at~~ any eligible Vermont private postsecondary institution, the benefit shall be the in-state tuition rate charged by ~~NVU~~ UVM.

(3) For courses at an eligible training institution offering nondegree,

certificate training, or continuing education programs, the benefit shall be the lower of the institution's standard tuition or the in-state tuition rate charged by ~~NVU~~ UVM.

* * *

(c) Eligibility.

(1) To be eligible for the Program, an individual, whether a resident or nonresident, shall satisfy all of the following requirements:

~~(1)~~(A) be an active member of the Vermont National Guard;

~~(2)~~(B) have successfully completed basic training;

~~(3)~~(C) be enrolled at UVM, a Vermont State College, or any other college or university located in Vermont in a program that leads to an undergraduate certificate or degree or at an eligible training institution in a program that leads to a certificate or other credential recognized by VSAC;

~~(4)~~(D) have not previously earned an undergraduate bachelor's degree;

~~(5)~~(E) continually demonstrate satisfactory academic progress as determined by criteria established by the Vermont National Guard and VSAC, in consultation with the educational institution at which the individual is enrolled under the Program;

~~(6)~~(F) have used available post-September 11, 2001 tuition benefits and other federally funded military tuition assistance; provided, however, that this subdivision shall not apply to:

~~(A)~~(i) tuition benefits and other federally funded military tuition assistance for which the individual has not yet earned the full amount of the benefit or tuition;

~~(B)~~(ii) Montgomery GI Bill benefits;

~~(C)~~(iii) post-September 11, 2001 educational program housing allowances;

~~(D)~~(iv) federal educational entitlements;

~~(E)~~(v) National Guard scholarship grants;

~~(F)~~(vi) loans under section 2856 of this title; and

~~(G)~~(vii) other nontuition benefits; and

~~(7)~~(G) have submitted a statement of good standing to VSAC signed by the individual's commanding officer within 30 days prior to the beginning of each semester.

(2) An individual may receive more than one undergraduate certificate or other credential recognized by VSAC under the Program, provided that the cost of all certificates and credentials received by the individual under the Program does not exceed the full-time in-state tuition rate charged by UVM for completion of an undergraduate baccalaureate degree.

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Sec. 2. VERMONT NATIONAL GUARD TUITION BENEFIT

PROGRAM EXTENSION; MASTER'S DEGREE OR A SECOND
BACCALAUREATE DEGREE; PILOT

- (a) The provisions of this section shall apply notwithstanding 16 V.S.A. § 2857.
- (b) A National Guard member shall be eligible to pursue a second undergraduate baccalaureate degree under the Vermont National Guard Tuition Benefit Program, whether a resident or nonresident, if the individual received a first undergraduate baccalaureate degree that was not funded under the Program or any other State funding source designed exclusively for members of the Vermont National Guard.
- (c)(1) A National Guard member shall be eligible to pursue a graduate degree under the Program, whether a resident or nonresident, if the individual agrees in the promissory note under 16 V.S.A. § 2857(b) to, upon receipt of the graduate degree and until the individual's service commitment under 16 V.S.A. § 2857(d) is satisfied, be employed full time in Vermont or, if unemployed, be actively seeking full-time employment in Vermont.
- (2) An individual may pursue a graduate degree under the Program even if the individual has received an undergraduate baccalaureate degree under the Program.
- (3) The Office of the Vermont Adjutant and Inspector General may

terminate the tuition benefit provided to an individual who has earned a graduate degree under the Program for failure to satisfy the work requirement under subdivision (1) this subsection.

Sec. 3. REPEAL

Sec. 2 of this act is repealed on July 1, 2025.

* * * Education of Military Families * * *

Sec. 4. 16 V.S.A. § 1073 is amended to read:

§ 1073. “LEGAL PUPIL” DEFINED; ACCESS TO SCHOOL

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(d) If one or both of a child’s parents or guardians are being relocated to the State under military orders, a school district shall allow registration of the student by mail, telephone, or electronically and shall not require the parent or legal guardian of the student or the student themselves to physically appear at a location within the district to register the student. Proof of required residency shall not be required at the time of the remote registration but shall be required within 10 days of the student’s attendance in the school district.

Sec. 5. 16 V.S.A. § 2185 is amended to read:

§ 2185. DETERMINATION OF RESIDENCY FOR TUITION PURPOSES

(a) The Board of Trustees shall adopt policies related to residency for tuition purposes, consistent with State and federal requirements.

(b) Any member of the U.S. Armed Forces on active duty who is

transferred to Vermont for duty other than for the purpose of education shall, upon transfer and for the period of active duty served in Vermont, be considered a resident for in-state tuition purposes at the start of the next semester or academic period.

(c) The spouse and dependent child of any person who is a member of the U.S. Armed Forces and stationed in this State pursuant to military orders shall be entitled to be considered, upon taking up a residence in the State, a resident for in-state tuition purposes at the start of the next semester or academic period. The spouse or dependent child shall not lose classification as an in-state student if the spouse or dependent child continues to reside in the State and the member of the U.S. Armed Forces is transferred on military orders or retires. The spouse or dependent child shall lose this classification as an in-state student under this subsection if the spouse or dependent child no longer resides in the State and shall regain this classification upon again taking up a residency in the State only if the member of the U.S. Armed Forces is stationed in this State pursuant to military orders.

Sec. 6. 16 V.S.A. § 2282a is amended to read:

§ 2282a. DETERMINATION OF RESIDENCY FOR TUITION PURPOSES

(a) Enrollment at an institution for higher learning, or presence within the State for the purposes of attending an institution of higher learning, shall not by itself constitute residence for in-state tuition purposes or for the purpose of

eligibility for assistance from the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation.

(b) Any member of the U.S. Armed Forces ~~of the United States~~ on active duty who is transferred to Vermont for duty other than for the purpose of education shall, upon transfer and for the period of active duty served in Vermont, be considered a resident for in-state tuition purposes at the start of the next semester or academic period.

(c) The spouse and dependent child of any person who is a member of the U.S. Armed Forces and stationed in this State pursuant to military orders shall be entitled to be considered, upon taking up a residence in the State, a resident for in-state tuition purposes at the start of the next semester or academic period. The spouse or dependent child shall not lose classification as an in-state student if the spouse or dependent child continues to reside in the State and the member of the U.S. Armed Forces is transferred on military orders or retires. The spouse or dependent child shall lose this classification as an in-state student under this subsection if the spouse or dependent child no longer resides in the State and shall regain this classification upon again taking up a residency in the State only if the member of the U.S. Armed Forces is stationed in this State pursuant to military orders.

* * * Purple Star School Programs * * *

Sec. 7. 16 V.S.A. § 568 is added to read:

§ 568. PURPLE STAR CAMPUS DESIGNATION

(a) As used in this section, “military-connected student” means a student who is a dependent of a current or former member of:

- (1) the U.S. military serving in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, or Coast Guard on active duty;
- (2) the Vermont National Guard;
- (3) a reserve force of the U.S. Armed Forces; or
- (4) a member of a military or reserve force described in subdivision (1), (2), or (3) of this subsection who was killed in the line of duty.

(b) The Agency of Education shall designate a school district as a Purple Star Campus if the school district applies and qualifies for the designation under this section.

(c) To qualify as a Purple Star Campus, a school district shall:

- (1) designate a staff member as a military liaison, whose duties include:
 - (A) identifying military-connected students enrolled in the district’s schools;
 - (B) serving as the point of contact between the school district and military-connected students and their families;
 - (C) determining appropriate school services available to military-

connected students; and

(D) assisting in coordinating school programs relevant to military-connected students;

(2) maintain within the school district an Internet website with an easily accessible web page that includes resources for military-connected students and their families, including information regarding:

(A) relocation to, enrollment at, registration at, and transferring records to the school district;

(B) academic planning, course sequences, and advanced classes available at the school district; and

(C) counseling and other support services available for military-connected students enrolled in the school district;

(3) maintain a transition program led by students, where appropriate, that assists military-connected students in transitioning into the school district;

(4) offer professional development for staff members on issues related to military-connected students; and

(5) offer at least one of the following initiatives:

(A) a resolution showing support for military-connected students and their families;

(B) recognition of the Month of the Military Child or Military Family Month with relevant events hosted by the school district; or

(C) a partnership with a local military installation that provides opportunities for active duty military members to volunteer with the school district, speak at an assembly, or host a field trip.

(d) To comply with the requirements under subdivisions (c)(2), (4), or (5) of this section, a school district may partner with a third party to provide those services and initiatives.

* * * Eligibility for Election to Serve as Adjutant and Inspector General * * *

Sec. 8. 2 V.S.A. § 10 is amended to read:

§ 10. ELECTION OF STATE AND JUDICIAL OFFICERS

(a) At 10 o'clock and 30 minutes, forenoon, on the seventh Thursday after their biennial meeting and organization, the Senate and House of Representatives shall meet in joint assembly and proceed therein to elect the State officers, except judicial officers, whose election by the Constitution and laws devolves in the first instance upon them in joint assembly, including the Sergeant at Arms, ~~the Adjutant and Inspector General~~, and legislative trustees of the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College. In case election of all such officers shall not be made on that day, they shall meet in joint assembly at 10 o'clock and 30 minutes, forenoon, on each succeeding day, Saturdays and Sundays excepted, and proceed in such election, until all such officers are elected.

* * *

(c) At 10 o'clock and 30 minutes, forenoon, on the seventh Thursday of the second year of the biennial session, the Senate and House of Representatives shall meet in joint assembly and proceed therein to elect the ~~legislative trustees of the Vermont State Colleges Corporation~~ State Officers, whose election by the Constitution and laws devolves in the first instance upon them in joint assembly, including the legislative trustees of the Vermont State Colleges Corporation and the Adjutant and Inspector General. In case election of all such ~~legislative trustees~~ officers shall not be made on that day, they shall meet in joint assembly at 10 o'clock and 30 minutes, forenoon, on each succeeding day, Saturdays and Sundays excepted, and proceed in such election, until all such ~~legislative trustees~~ officers are elected.

Sec. 9. 20 V.S.A. § 363 is amended to read:

§ 363. OFFICERS GENERALLY

(a)(1) The General Assembly shall biennially elect an Adjutant and Inspector General for a term of two years.

* * *

(3) In order to be eligible for election to serve as Adjutant and Inspector General, an individual shall:

(A) have attained the rank of Colonel (O-6) or above;

(B) be a current member of the U.S. Army, the U.S. Air Force, the U.S. Army Reserve, the U.S. Air Force Reserve, the Army National Guard, or

the Air National Guard or be eligible to return to active service in the Army
National Guard or the Air National Guard;

(C) be a graduate of a Senior Service College; and

(D) be eligible for federal recognition.

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Sec. 10. CURRENT TERM OF ADJUTANT AND INSPECTOR GENERAL

Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the term of the
Adjutant and Inspector General in office on the effective date of this act shall
end on March 1, 2024.

* * * Effective Date * * *

Sec. 11. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.