

H.517; Section-by-Section; as passed by Senate

May 4, 2022

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

Sec. 1. Amends 16 V.S.A. § 2857 (Vermont National Guard Tuition Benefit Program) to change the amount of the tuition benefits and to clarify that the benefits can be used to obtain multiple certificates under the Program.

Tuition benefit changes

- For courses at any Vermont State College institution or the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College (UVM), the tuition benefit would be the in-state residence tuition rate for these institutions; under current law, the tuition benefit for Castleton University is at the in-state tuition rate charged by Northern Vermont University (NVU).
- For courses at any eligible Vermont private postsecondary institution, the tuition benefit would be the in-state residence tuition rate for UVM; under current law, the tuition benefit for these institutions is at the in-state tuition rate charged by NVU.
- For courses at an eligible training institution offering nondegree, certificate training, or continuing education programs, the tuition benefit would be the lower of the institution's standard tuition or the in-state tuition rate charged by UVM; under current law, the tuition benefit for these institutions is at the in-state tuition rate charged by NVU.

Clarification that the benefit can be used to obtain multiple certificates

- New subdivision (2) provides that 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.

Sec. 2. Creates a three-year pilot program to allow tuition benefits under the Vermont National Guard Tuition Benefit Program to be used for a second baccalaureate degree and for a master's degree.

Second baccalaureate degree

- A National Guard member would be eligible to pursue a second undergraduate baccalaureate degree under the Program 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.

Master's degree

- A National Guard member would be eligible to pursue a graduate degree under the Program if the individual agrees to, upon receipt of the graduate degree and until the individual's National Guard service commitment is satisfied, be employed full time in Vermont or, if unemployed, be actively seeking full-time employment in Vermont.
- An individual would be able to pursue a graduate degree under the Program even if the individual has received an undergraduate baccalaureate degree under the Program.
- Would permit the Office of the Vermont Adjutant and Inspector General to terminate this tuition benefit if the individual fails to satisfy the work requirement.

Sec. 3. Repeals the pilot program on July 1, 2025.

***** Education of Military Families *****

Sec. 4. Amends 16 V.S.A. § 1073 ("legal pupil" defined; access to school) to add a new subsection (d) that allows remote school registration of students if one or both of the student's parents or guardians are being relocated to Vermont under military orders.

Sec. 5. Amends 16 V.S.A. § 2185 (Determination of Residency for Tuition Purposes at VSC) to add a new subsection (c) that provides in-state tuition benefits for 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.

- 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. Amends 16 V.S.A. § 2282a (Determination of Residency for Tuition Purposes at UVM) to add a new subsection (c) that is identical to the language above for VSC.

***** Purple Star Campus Designation *****

Sec. 7. Adds 16 V.S.A. § 568 (Purple Star School Programs).

- Subsection (a) defines “military-connected student.”
- Subsection (b) would require the Agency of Education to designate a school district as a Purple Star Campus if the school district applies and qualifies for the designation under this section.
- Subsection (c) would impose a number of requirements to qualify as a Purple Star Campus, set out in subdivisions (1)–(5); a school district would be required to:
 - designate a staff member as a military liaison, with specific duties;
 - 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 specific information;
 - maintain a transition program led by students, where appropriate, that assists military-connected students in transitioning into the school district;
 - offer professional development for staff members on issues related to military-connected students; and

- offer at least one of the following initiatives:
 - a resolution showing support for military-connected students and their families;
 - recognition of the Month of the Military Child or Military Family Month with relevant events hosted by the school district; or
 - 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.
- Subsection (d) would allow a school district to partner with a third party to provide services and initiatives under subdivision (c)(2), (4), or (5) of this section.

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

Sec. 8. Amends 2 V.S.A. § 10 (election of State and judicial officers) to move the election of the Adjutant and Inspector General from the first year of each biennium to the second.

Sec. 9. Amends 20 V.S.A. § 363 (officers generally) to require that for an individual to be eligible to serve as the Adjutant and Inspector General of the Vermont National Guard the individual must:

- have attained the rank of Colonel (O-6) or above (This will ensure that the individual can receive a federal promotion to Brigadier General during their initial term as Adjutant General);
- 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 (This ensures that an individual serving as the Adjutant General will be familiar with at least one of the service branches they will be leading and that they will be an active-duty member of the Guard during their service as Adjutant General);

- be a graduate of a Senior Service College (Senior service colleges include schools such as the Army War College, the Air War College, the Joint Advanced Warfighting School, and the NATO Defense College, among others. Spaces at the senior service colleges are extremely limited and the course load is demanding, making it necessary for an individual to graduate prior to serving as the Adjutant General); and
- be eligible for federal recognition (This means that the individual must meet specific federal standards necessary for nomination and approval for promotion to the federal rank of Brigadier General or higher, including requirements related to years left before retirement, time serving in current rank, health and physical fitness, military education, security clearance, etc.).

Sec. 10. Current term of Adjutant and Inspector General. Extends the current term of the Adjutant General through the end of February 2024 to correspond to the new election date in the second year of the biennium.

***** Effective Date *****

Sec. 11. EFFECTIVE DATE—on passage.

After passage, the title of the bill would be amended to read: “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”