

SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 278

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JANUARY 30, 2020

The Senate Higher Education Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 278 with committee amendments.

P.L.1997, c.377 (C.18A:62-4.2) currently provides that a student at a public institution of higher education who is unable to complete a course due to being called to partial or full mobilization for State or federal active duty as a member of the National Guard or a Reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States is entitled to certain options with respect to the student's grade for the course, and for the refund of tuition, fees, and room and board. As amended, this bill broadens the scope of the law to benefit a wider military community that includes service members who are unable to complete a course due to deployment, mobilization, reassignment, or other military obligation.

Under the bill, "service member" means an individual who is serving on active duty as a member of the Armed Forces of the United States, or as a member of a Reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States or the National Guard. A "veteran" is defined as an individual who served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States, or who served as a member of a Reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States or the National Guard, and who was honorably discharged or released under honorable circumstances from active service.

The bill also directs each public institution of higher education to establish policies and procedures to permit the late registration of a student who is a veteran or a service member upon the student's return from deployment, mobilization, reassignment, or other military obligation. Under the bill, the institution cannot charge a late fee or similar penalty on a registration submitted pursuant to the bill's provisions.

The committee amended the bill to:

- apply the provisions of P.L.1997, c.377 (C.18A:62-4.2) to a wider military community that includes service members who are unable to complete a course due to deployment, mobilization, reassignment, or other military obligation;
- provide a definition of "service member" and "veteran;" and
- update the title to reflect the amended bill.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2020-2021 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.