

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 278

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: FEBRUARY 13, 2020

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 278 (1R).

New Jersey law, 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. 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.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services concludes that this bill would result in a revenue decrease to public institutions of higher education since those institutions would provide certain refunds to a broader set of students who are unable to complete a course due to deployment,

mobilization, reassignment, or other military obligation as a service member.

The bill may also result in a marginal tuition revenue increase to public institutions of higher education due to the bill's provision that requires the institutions to permit service members or veterans to register late for courses upon those students' return from their military obligations. A public institution would experience such a revenue increase to the extent that the bill would cause certain veterans or service members, who otherwise would not have attended the institution, to enroll in the institution.