# SENATE, No. 961 **STATE OF NEW JERSEY** 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JANUARY 27, 2020

Sponsored by: Senator TROY SINGLETON District 7 (Burlington) Senator NILSA CRUZ-PEREZ District 5 (Camden and Gloucester)

**Co-Sponsored by:** Senators Brown and Greenstein

#### **SYNOPSIS**

Establishes annual grant program to recognize public institutions of higher education that offer comprehensive array of veteran programs and services.

#### **CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/10/2020)

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1 AN ACT establishing a Troops to College Grant Program and 2 amending P.L.2009, c.125. 3 4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State 5 of New Jersey: 6 7 1. Section 2 of P.L.2009, c.125 (C.18A:3B-42) is amended to 8 read as follows: 9 2. a. The [New Jersey Commission on] Secretary of Higher 10 Education, in consultation with the Department of Military and 11 Veterans' Affairs, shall establish the Troops to College Program. 12 The purpose of the program shall be to assist New Jersey's public 13 institutions of higher education in coordinating the provision of a 14 comprehensive array of services to assist veterans in making the 15 transition into the college classroom. The services may include, but 16 need not be limited to, assistance in applying for State and federal 17 student financial aid, counseling resources, a campus veterans' 18 assistance officer to provide a single point of contact for 19 information on the institution's benefits and programs for veterans, 20 and an online resource to consolidate pertinent information 21 specifically for veterans attending that institution. 22 b. The [commission] secretary in implementing the Troops to 23 College Program shall include on its Internet site information to 24 assist veterans in accessing the higher education opportunities that 25 exist in the State. The information shall include, but need not be 26 limited to: 27 (1) contact information for the campus veterans' assistance officer at each of the public institutions of higher education; and 28 29 (2) information on the array of programs and services available 30 to veterans at each of the public institutions of higher education. 31 c. The secretary, in consultation with the department, shall 32 establish a Troops to College Grant Program. Under the program, 33 the secretary shall annually select up to three public institutions of 34 higher education to receive a \$150,000 Troops to College grant. In 35 order to receive a grant, an institution shall demonstrate that it is 36 providing a comprehensive array of services, benefits, and programs for veterans attending the institution. In awarding a grant to an 37 institution, the secretary shall consider the following factors: 38 39 (1) the total number of veterans enrolled in the institution; 40 (2) the existence of a veterans' affairs office at the institution 41 and the number of staff assigned to the office; 42 (3) whether the institution has entered into the Department of Defense Voluntary Education Partnership Memorandum of 43 44 Understanding; 45 (4) whether the institution's tuition and fees are at or below the minimum limits established by the "Post-9/11 Veterans Educational 46 47 Assistance Act of 2008," Pub.L110-252 (38 U.S.C. s.3301 et seq.);

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in **bold-faced brackets** [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

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1	(5) whether the institution participates in the Yellow Ribbon
2	Program of the "Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of
2	<u>2008," Pub.L110-252 (38 U.S.C. s.3301 et seq.);</u>
4	(6) whether the institution waives its application fee and offers
5	priority registration to veterans;
6	(7) the level of academic and staff support provided to veterans
7	enrolled in the institution;
8	(8) the number and type of extracurricular activities designed
9	for and offered to veterans enrolled in the institution;
10	(9) the amount of institutional funds allocated to support
11	veterans enrolled in the institution, including the number of
12	scholarships offered to veteran students;
13	(10) whether the institution offers veteran housing or provides
14	an area on campus where veteran students may meet and discuss
15	issues of common interest;
16	(11) the course completion rate of veterans enrolled in the
17	institution;
18	(12) the institution's retention and graduation rates for veterans
19	enrolled in the institution;
20	(13) the student loan default rate for veterans enrolled in the
21	institution; and
22	(14) the employment and salary status of veterans six years
23	following graduation from the institution.
24	(cf: P.L.2009, c.125, s.2)
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26	2. This act shall take effect in the first full academic year
27	following enactment.
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30	STATEMENT
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32	This bill establishes an annual grant program under the State's
33	Troops to College Program which was established in 2009 to assist
34	New Jersey's public institutions of higher education in coordinating
35	the provision of a comprehensive array of services to assist veterans
36	in making the transition into the college classroom. This bill will
37	recognize and support those efforts through the establishment of an
38	annual grant program. The program will be developed by the
39	Secretary of Higher Education, in consultation with the Department
40	of Military and Veterans' Affairs. Under the program, the secretary
41	will annually select up to three public institutions of higher
42	education to receive a \$150,000 Troops to College grant. In order
43	to receive a grant, an institution must demonstrate that it is offering
44	a comprehensive array of services, benefits, and programs for
45	veterans attending the institution.
46	The bill outlines a number of factors that the secretary will
47	consider in awarding the grants that include among others: the total
48	number of veterans enrolled in the institution; the existence of a

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veterans' affairs office at the institution and the number of staff 1 assigned to the office; whether the institution participates in the 2 3 Yellow Ribbon Program of the "Post-9/11 Veterans Educational 4 Assistance Act of 2008"; the amount of institutional funds allocated 5 to support veterans enrolled in the institution, including the number of scholarships offered to veteran students; whether the institution 6 7 offers veteran housing or provides an area on campus where veteran 8 students may meet and discuss issues of common interest; the 9 institution's retention and graduation rates for veterans enrolled in 10 the institution; and the employment and salary status of veterans six 11 years following graduation from the institution.