

SENATE, No. 3576

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 22, 2021

Sponsored by:

Senator MICHAEL L. TESTA, JR.

District 1 (Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland)

Senator VIN GOPAL

District 11 (Monmouth)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senator A.M.Bucco

SYNOPSIS

Establishes New Jersey Veteran Grant Program in Higher Education Student Assistance Authority.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/25/2021)

1 **AN ACT** establishing the New Jersey Veteran Grant Program and
2 supplementing chapter 71B of Title 18A of the New Jersey
3 Statutes.

4

5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*

7

8 1. There is established the New Jersey Veteran Grant Program
9 for veterans enrolled in public institutions of higher education. It
10 shall be the duty of the Higher Education Student Assistance
11 Authority to administer the program.

12

13 2. The purpose of the New Jersey Veteran Grant Program shall
14 be to assist veterans in achieving their higher education goals.

15 a. A grant under the program shall be in an amount established
16 by the authority and subject to the amount of available
17 appropriations. A grant shall be subject to the prior application of
18 other grants and scholarships against the cost of tuition and
19 mandatory fees for up to 18 credit hours in any semester, for an
20 eligible student enrolled in a course of undergraduate or graduate
21 study at a public institution of higher education.

22 b. In the event that the amount awarded to an eligible student
23 pursuant to subsection a. of this section does not cover the total cost
24 of the student's tuition and mandatory fees, the public institution of
25 higher education at which the student is enrolled shall waive any
26 remaining balance.

27 c. To be eligible to receive a grant under the program, a student
28 shall:

29 (1) have fulfilled at least one year of federal active duty service
30 in the Armed Forces of the United States, including active duty
31 service while in the New Jersey National Guard or a Reserve
32 Component of the Armed Forces; or served in a foreign country in a
33 time of hostilities in that country; or received a medical discharge
34 due to an illness or injury related to the performance of duties;

35 (2) have received an honorable discharge from military service,
36 or is currently honorably serving;

37 (3) be a State resident pursuant to guidelines established by the
38 authority at either the time of entering military service or at the time
39 of enrollment in a public institution of higher education in the State;

40 (4) have applied for all other available forms of State and
41 federal need-based grants and merit scholarships, including
42 education benefits through the United States Department of
43 Veterans Affairs and excluding loans, the full amount of which
44 grants and scholarships shall be applied to tuition to reduce the
45 amount of any grant that the student shall receive under the
46 provisions of this act;

1 (5) be enrolled in good academic standing in an undergraduate
2 or graduate course of study at a public institution of higher
3 education in the State;

4 (6) not be a current scholarship recipient of the Reserve Officer
5 Training Corps; and

6 (7) not be in default on any student loan, or owe a refund on any
7 State or federal grant.

8 d. A student who is dismissed for academic or disciplinary
9 reasons from a public institution of higher education shall no longer
10 be eligible for a grant under this act. If a student participating in
11 the program is dismissed for disciplinary reasons, the student shall
12 repay in full all amounts received under the program. The public
13 institution of higher education shall be responsible for collecting the
14 repayment, or the amount of any overpayment or other improper
15 payment, of any State awards under the program, in accordance
16 with the provisions of N.J.S.18A:71B-10.

17 e. A student grant may be renewed upon the student's filing of
18 a renewal financial aid application and providing evidence that the
19 student has satisfied the requirements pursuant to subsection c. of
20 this section.

21
22 3. There is annually appropriated from the General Fund to the
23 Higher Education Student Assistance Authority such funds as are
24 necessary to effectuate the purposes of this act.

25
26 4. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply the
27 first full academic year following the date of enactment.

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30 STATEMENT

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32 This bill establishes the New Jersey Veteran Grant Program for
33 veterans enrolled in public institutions of higher education. The
34 purpose of the program is to assist veterans in achieving their
35 higher education goals. The program will be administered by the
36 Higher Education Student Assistance Authority.

37 Under the program, an eligible student may attend a public
38 institution of higher education at no cost to the student. The bill
39 provides that a grant under the program will be in an amount
40 established by the authority and subject to the amount of available
41 appropriations. A grant will be subject to the prior application of
42 other grants and scholarships against the cost of tuition and
43 mandatory fees for up to 18 credit hours in any semester, for an
44 eligible student enrolled in a course of undergraduate or graduate
45 study at a public institution of higher education. In the event that
46 the grant amount does not cover the total cost of tuition and
47 mandatory fees, the public institution of higher education at which

1 the student is enrolled will be required to waive any remaining
2 balance.

3 In order to qualify for the program, the bill requires that a
4 student must:

5 (1) have fulfilled at least one year of federal active duty service
6 in the Armed Forces of the United States, which includes active
7 duty service in the New Jersey National Guard or a Reserve
8 Component of the Armed Forces; or served in a foreign country in a
9 time of hostilities in that country; or received a medical discharge
10 due to an illness or injury related to the performance of duties;

11 (2) have received an honorable discharge from military service,
12 or is currently honorably serving;

13 (3) be a State resident;

14 (4) have applied for all other available forms of State and
15 federal need-based grants and merit scholarships, exclusive of
16 loans;

17 (5) be enrolled in good academic standing in an undergraduate
18 or graduate course of study at a public institution of higher
19 education in the State;

20 (6) not be a current scholarship recipient of the Reserve Officer
21 Training Corps; and

22 (7) not be in default on any student loan, or owe a refund on any
23 State or federal grant.

24 The bill provides that a student who is dismissed for academic or
25 disciplinary reasons from a public institution of higher education
26 will no longer be eligible for the program. If a student participating
27 in the program is dismissed for disciplinary reasons, the student
28 must repay in full all amounts received under the program. The bill
29 provides that a student grant may be renewed upon the student's
30 filing of a renewal financial aid application and providing evidence
31 that the student has satisfied the program's requirements.

32 Finally, the bill annually appropriates from the General Fund to
33 the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority such funds as
34 are necessary to effectuate the bill's purposes.