

ASSEMBLY MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 259

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 9, 2021

The Assembly Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee reports favorably Assembly Resolution No. 259.

This Assembly resolution urges the United States Congress to pass the "Veterans Economic Recovery Act of 2021," to provide unemployed veterans and members of the National Guard and Reserves with education benefits to pursue training in high-demand occupations.

As of December 2020, the unemployment rate among veterans rose to 6.5 percent, after having been just 3.1 percent in 2019, and of the 462,000 veterans unemployed at the beginning of 2021, more than 81 percent are of prime working age, between 22 and 66 years old. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate for veterans in New Jersey in 2020 was 8.1 percent, higher than the national average.

The "Veterans Economic Recovery Act of 2021" would create a program to retrain unemployed veterans and members of the National Guard or Reserves with 12 months of education benefits to pursue training in high-demand occupations. These benefits would be equivalent to the benefits provided under the post-9/11 GI Bill, focusing on veterans who are not currently eligible for those GI Bill benefits. Members of the National Guard or Reserves who were mobilized on federal orders to assist with state responses to the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic would also be eligible for the training program.