

SENATE, No. 665

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator SAMUEL D. THOMPSON

District 12 (Burlington, Middlesex, Monmouth and Ocean)

SYNOPSIS

Clarifies that certain former New Jersey National Guard members may be eligible for higher education tuition assistance.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 **AN ACT** concerning tuition assistance for members of the New
2 Jersey National Guard and amending P.L.1999, c.46.

3

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

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7 1. Section 21 of P.L.1999, c.46 (C.18A:62-24) is amended to
8 read as follows:

9 21. a. Any member of the New Jersey National Guard shall be
10 permitted to attend regularly-scheduled courses at any public
11 institution of higher education in this State enumerated in
12 N.J.S.18A:62-1 and receive up to 16 credits per semester tuition-
13 free provided that:

14 (1) the member has completed Initial Active Duty Training and,
15 except as otherwise provided pursuant to subsection c. of this
16 section, is in good standing as an active member of the New Jersey
17 National Guard;

18 (2) the member has been accepted to pursue a course of
19 undergraduate study and is enrolled as an undergraduate student in
20 good standing at that institution or a course of graduate study and is
21 enrolled as a graduate student in good standing at that institution;
22 and

23 (3) the member has applied for all available State student grants
24 and scholarships and all available federal student grants and
25 scholarships for which the member is eligible.

26 b. The State shall reimburse a public institution of higher
27 education for the tuition cost of each National Guard member who
28 enrolls in the institution pursuant to the provisions of this section.

29 c. Any member of the New Jersey National Guard whose
30 enrollment in a public institution of higher education on a tuition-
31 free basis pursuant to subsection a. of this section is interrupted by a
32 deployment to active duty, including any deployment that ends prior
33 to the effective date of P.L.2007, c.11, shall be permitted to receive
34 the free tuition benefit after discharge from service under conditions
35 other than dishonorable. In the event of a non-medical discharge or
36 a medical discharge that is not caused by an illness or injury related
37 to the performance of duties for the National Guard, eligibility for
38 the free tuition benefit shall begin from the date of discharge and
39 shall continue for one semester or a period of time equal to the
40 length of the deployment, whichever is longer. In the event of
41 medical discharge or medical retirement as a result of illness or
42 injury incurred in the combat theater, as a result of terrorist action,
43 or in the response to a natural disaster, eligibility for the free tuition
44 benefit shall begin from the date of discharge or retirement and
45 shall continue until completion of the degree program in which
46 enrolled or for five years, whichever occurs first.

47 (cf: P.L.2007, c.11, s.1)

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

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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6 In 2007 the Legislature amended the provisions of P.L.1999,
7 c.46, the law which provides free tuition benefits to active members
8 of the New Jersey National Guard enrolled in public institutions of
9 higher education. Under the 2007 amendment, the tuition benefit
10 was extended to former members of the Guard whose use of the free
11 tuition benefit was interrupted by deployment to active duty. This
12 bill clarifies that the extension of the tuition benefit to Guard
13 members whose education was interrupted by deployment to active
14 duty includes those members whose deployment ended prior to the
15 enactment of the 2007 amendment to the law. It reflects what was
16 the original intention of the Legislature that all Guard members
17 whose receipt of the tuition benefit was interrupted as a result of
18 deployment should be able to take advantage of the benefit for some
19 limited period of time following release from active duty service.