

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2014 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 610

(Senator Jennings, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Appropriations

National Guard - Tuition Assistance - Members of Disbanded Units

This bill provides for continuing tuition assistance for a member of the Maryland National Guard already receiving assistance from the Military Department whose unit has been disbanded on or after September 1, 2013, due to budgetary cuts, Base Realignment and Closure, or any other reason.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2014.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Minimal. The Military Department reports that in the past two years, only one airman who was a member of a disbanded unit received tuition assistance. The annual tuition assistance provided to that airman was \$1,500. Although the number of units that may eventually disband is unknown, it is assumed that the bill does not significantly affect State finances.

Local Effect: Minimal.

Small Business Effect: Minimal or none.

Analysis

Bill Summary: Under the bill, such an affected Maryland National Guard member whose unit has been disbanded on or after September 1, 2013, may satisfy the requirements for tuition assistance provided under current law by transferring to another active duty, reserve, or National Guard Unit in the State or in another state. If a member who receives such tuition assistance is offered early separation by the military following

the disbanding of the member's unit, the member is excused from specified requirements to remain an active member for a certain time period following the completion of the course.

Current Law: To the extent that funds are provided in the State budget, the Military Department may provide assistance equal to 50% of the cost of in-state tuition for any regularly scheduled undergraduate credit course, graduate credit course, professional credit course, vocational-technical course, or trade course for any active member attending an institution who is certified as eligible by the Adjutant General.

A member who receives tuition assistance for an undergraduate credit, vocational-technical, or trade course must remain an active member for at least two years following the completion of the course. A member who receives tuition assistance for a graduate or professional credit course must remain an active member for at least four years following the completion of the course.

A "member" means an individual who is regularly enlisted in the National Guard or holds a commission in the National Guard as (1) an officer in the grade of major or below or (2) a warrant officer.

An "institution" means:

- any campus of the University System of Maryland, any community college established under Title 16 of the Education Article, Morgan State University, or St. Mary's College;
- any private institution of higher education that grants a member a tuition waiver of at least 50%;
- any public postsecondary vocational-technical or trade school; or
- any private postsecondary vocational-technical or trade school that grants a member a tuition waiver of at least 50%.

"Tuition" means the basic instructional charge for undergraduate, graduate, professional, vocational-technical, and trade school credit courses and related fees at an institution. The term does not include charges for self-supporting programs.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Military Department, Morgan State University, University System of Maryland, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 16, 2014
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