



Military & Veteran Educational Benefits in the Commonwealth of Virginia

Terrie L. Suit

Secretary of Veterans Affairs & Homeland Security

Virginia's military population

- The Commonwealth is home to 327,000 active-duty military members and family members
- 2nd largest active-duty military population in the nation
- 823,000 veterans call Virginia home
- The 7th greatest number of veterans in the country and we're continuing to grow
- 27 military installations and 7 Coast Guard commands in the Commonwealth



Making Virginia “America’s Most Veteran Friendly State”

- On December 23, 2010 Governor McDonnell signed Executive Order Twenty-Nine “Serving Virginia’s Veterans”
- E.O. #29 has the stated goal of “making Virginia our nation’s most veteran-friendly state.”
- E.O. #29 directs all state agencies to “to identify new, expanded, or customized services that meet the educational, health care, and social services needs of Virginia’s veterans” and to work with the Department of Veterans Services to determine what resources are necessary to accomplish this directive



“America’s Most Veteran Friendly State”

2011 Veterans Legislation



Mrs. McDonnell looks on as Governor McDonnell signs a number of veteran and military friendly pieces of legislation.

-*SB824 (Edwards)/HB1861 (Anderson):*

-Increases educational opportunity for veterans by waiving the one-year residency requirement needed to qualify for in-state tuition rates

-*HB 1976 (Greason):*

- Adds a citizen member to the Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children



Current Legislation Supporting Military and Veteran Education within Virginia

- *§23-7.4 Eligibility for in-state tuition charges*
 - Authorizes veterans who elect to establish Virginia as their permanent residence for domiciliary purposes to establish immediate residency in Virginia and become eligible for in-state tuition, waiving the required one-year waiting period (*SB824/HB1861, 2011 session*)
 - Ensures that the established Virginia domicile of a spouse of an active duty military service member, and therefore in-state tuition eligibility, must not be affected by the establishment and maintenance of a place of residence in another jurisdiction for the purpose of maintaining a joint household with such member
 - Provides that the spouse of an active duty military service member, if such spouse has established domicile and claimed a dependent student on federal or state income tax returns, must not be subject to minimum income tests or requirements
 - Provides for members of the Virginia National Guard with at least two years of obligation remaining, to receive a tuition grant in the amount of the difference between the full cost of tuition and any other educational benefits for which the member is eligible due to their service in the National Guard



Current Legislation

- *23-9.2:3.7 Course credit; active duty military students (HB 1810, Morrissey- 2009 session)*
 - Mandates that the governing boards of each institution of higher education implement policies that provide opportunities for students mobilized to active military service during an academic semester to earn full course credit.
- *23-9.6:2 Tuition relief, refunds, and reinstatement for certain students*
 - Mandates that the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) issue, and regularly revise, guidelines for tuition relief, refunds, and reinstatement for students who have been required to withdrawal from institutions of higher education due to military service



Education for Military Families Initiatives

- *22.1-3 Persons to whom public schools shall be free*
 - Forbids school districts from charging tuition on children of military personnel when the parents relocate to housing in another school district due to military orders, providing educational continuity.
- *22.1-5 Regulations concerning admission of certain persons to schools; tuition charges*
 - Prevents tuition being assessed on children of deployed National Guard or members of the U.S. Armed Forces when the temporary custodian of the child lives in a different school district
- *22.1-360 Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children*
 - Creates a compact designed to remove barriers to educational success imposed on children of military families because of frequent moves and deployment of their parents



Education for Military Families Initiatives

- *22.1-360 Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children*
 - Creates a compact designed to remove barriers to educational success imposed on children of military families because of frequent moves and deployment of their parents
 - Facilitates the timely enrollment of children of military families and prevents placement disadvantages due to difficulty in education records transfer or entrance/age requirement differences between institutions
 - Prevents disadvantages caused by variations in attendance requirements, scheduling, sequencing, grading, course content, and/or assessment between institutions
 - Facilitates the on-time graduation of children of military families
 - Provides for collection and sharing of information between and among member states, schools, and military families under this compact



Military Families Initiatives

- *223-7.4:1 Waiver of tuition and certain charges and fees for eligible children and spouses of certain military members, ...*
 - Establishes the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program
 - Qualified survivors and dependents of military service members, who have been admitted to any public institution of higher education and are deemed eligible by the Department of Veterans Services, are admitted free of tuition and all required fees



Veterans and Military Education Initiatives

- Increased transferability of courses
- Enhanced communication between universities and military learning centers
- Higher preference for course selections of active duty and reservists
- Active duty and reservists receive class registration priority
- Coordination with Workforce Programs
- “Central Ombudsman” for military students



Successes in Higher Education

- Virginia Commonwealth University
 - The “Green Zone Program” identifies faculty and staff volunteers throughout the university who have received special training and are knowledgeable about issues facing student veterans and the resources available to help them
- Old Dominion University
 - Offers over 50 college degree programs through online learning or remote campus locations. Over 15 of ODU’s remote campuses are located on active duty military installations



We Are Virginia Veterans Conference

- Tuesday, August 9 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm at Virginia Military Institute in Lexington
 - Opportunity for administrators at institutions of higher education to receive valuable information regarding educational needs of military personnel and veterans

