WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR SESSION, 2010

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ENROLLED

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE
FOR
House Bill No. 4145

(By Delegates Iaquinta, Fleischauer, Eldridge and D. Walker)

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Passed March 13, 2010

In Effect Ninety Days From Passage
AN ACT to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new section, designated §18B-4-9, relating to requiring the Commission and Council to establish and implement measures to provide services and facilities to assist student veterans at state institutions of higher education; and providing for annual reports to the Legislature.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

That the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended by adding thereto a new section, designated §18B-4-9, to read as follows:

ARTICLE 4. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

§18B-4-9. Development of services and facilities for student veterans.

1. (a) Legislative findings. -- The Legislature finds that veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States that attend
institutions of higher education in this state have many unique needs, issues and concerns that most traditional students do not have. Student veterans that are returning to fulfill their needs for higher education who have been or during their pursuit of higher education may be deployed to active duty often face unique issues and concerns that are unprecedented and unique to the current generation of veterans of the post 9/11 era of service in the Armed Forces. Many of these veterans have had or will be subject to multiple deployments to active duty, including overseas deployment, resulting in many unique issues and challenges in their pursuit of higher education.

(b) Legislative intent. -- It is the intent of the Legislature that state institutions of higher education provide adequate services and facilities for student veterans in order to better serve their unique issues and needs and to make West Virginia's state institutions of higher education veteran-friendly.

(c) The Commission and Council each shall establish and implement measures in the state institutions of higher education under their respective jurisdictions to assure that veterans enrolled in the institutions receive services and are provided facilities appropriate for their unique needs, that student veterans complete programs of study and earn degrees, and that the institutions become veteran-friendly by actively and effectively providing academic and social support and assistance to student veterans. The measures shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

(1) Establishing veteran-friendly community and technical college degree programs which recognize and award academic credit toward degrees for various types of technical and vocational military training and experience;
(2) Developing policies for each state institution of higher education to grant academic credit for Armed Forces experiences;

(3) Developing programs to facilitate student veterans in sharing their unique knowledge and experience in the military through public school programs and local community organizations;

(4) Establishing and sponsoring an organization for student veterans on campus and encouraging other veteran-friendly organizations;

(5) Appointing and training specific faculty within each degree program or major as liaisons and contacts for student veterans;

(6) Providing information about the Regents Bachelor of Arts Degree program to student veterans and potential student veterans;

(7) Coordinating existing disability services on campus with veteran disability services available from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, other federal and state agencies, and private resources;

(8) Providing counselors on each campus who are trained to effectively respond to the unique needs of veterans and to provide services or provide referrals to services to fulfill these needs for student veterans;

(9) Developing training materials on responding to student veteran needs to be available for continued professional development of counselors to student veterans;
(10) Facilitating regular statewide meetings for all personnel at state institutions of higher education who regularly provide specific services to student veterans to discuss and develop best practices, exchange ideas and experiences, and hear presentations by individuals with generally accepted expertise in areas of the various needs of student veterans;

(11) Establishing a procedure to periodically apprise appropriate state and federal agencies of the status of student veterans in West Virginia;

(12) Establishing a program to create a collaborative relationship between student veterans and alumni of the institution, and with prospective employers to facilitate and provide employment as well as social opportunities to graduating student veterans; and

(13) Developing and facilitating communications between state institutions of higher education and various veteran organizations in the state to advance veteran causes that benefit student veterans.

(d) The Commission and Council jointly shall submit a report to the Legislature on September 1, annually, on the progress toward implementing the provisions of this section.
That Joint Committee on Enrolled Bills hereby certifies that the foregoing bill is correctly enrolled.

Chairman Senate Committee

Chairman House Committee

Originating in the House.

In effect ninety days from passage.

Clerk of the Senate

Clerk of the House of Delegates

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House of Delegates

The within bill approved this the 26th day of March, 2010.

Governor
PRESENTED TO THE GOVERNOR

MAR 25 2010

Time 10:00 AM