

House Bill 970

By: Representatives Scott of the 76th, Davis of the 87th, Schofield of the 60th, and Williams of the 168th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 2 of Chapter 4 of Title 38 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
2 relating to veterans benefits, so as to enact the "Veterans Postsecondary Education Act"; to
3 provide a short title; to provide for definitions; to provide for certain educational benefits to
4 veterans, their spouses, and children; to provide for in-state resident tuition rates for minor
5 children and spouses of veterans enrolled in the university system of higher learning and
6 public postsecondary education programs; to provide for a fee waiver of online
7 postsecondary course work; to provide course credit based on military experience, education,
8 and training; to provide for the development and implementation of certain nursing degree
9 programs for veterans; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other
10 purposes.

11 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

12 **SECTION 1.**

13 Article 2 of Chapter 4 of Title 38 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
14 veterans benefits, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

H. B. 970

15 "38-4-38.

16 (a) This Code section shall be known and may be cited as the 'Veterans Postsecondary
17 Education Act.'

18 (b) As used in this Code section, the term:

19 (1) 'Armed forces' means the United States Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, Space
20 Force, and Coast Guard, and also includes the units across those branches of the services
21 having women troops.

22 (2) 'Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program for Students with Intellectual
23 Disabilities' has the same meaning as provided in 20 U.S.C. Section 1140.

24 (3) 'Tuition and fees' means fees paid for educational instruction.

25 (c) Any child of a disabled or deceased veteran or otherwise eligible for educational
26 benefits under this Code section who is admitted to attend and attends a comprehensive
27 transition and postsecondary program for students with intellectual disabilities at a
28 university system four-year college or university shall be eligible to receive benefits equal
29 to the benefits provided pursuant to this chapter, to any other child eligible for educational
30 benefits in an undergraduate course of study at a state four-year college or university under
31 this chapter without regard as to whether the program is a degree, certificate, or nondegree
32 program.

33 (d) For purposes of admission and tuition, a university system public institution of higher
34 education or public postsecondary program may consider that a resident student includes
35 any of the following:

36 (1) Any person who, at the time of registration, satisfies one of the following:

37 (A) Is a member or the spouse of a member of the armed forces on full-time active
38 duty stationed in Georgia under orders other than attending school;

39 (B) Is a veteran of the armed forces, provided that the veteran has become a resident
40 of Georgia and satisfies at least one of the following conditions:

41 (i) The veteran has served on active duty for a continuous period of time, not less
42 than two years, and has received an honorable discharge as verified by a United States
43 Department of Defense Form 214 within five years of enrolling in a Georgia public
44 institution of higher education;

45 (ii) The veteran is currently serving in a reserve component of the armed forces, as
46 verified by a memorandum from the commanding officer of the veteran student; or

47 (iii) The veteran has been assigned a service-connected disability by the United
48 States Department of Veterans Affairs; or

49 (2) Any person who, at the time of initial registration, is a minor and whose supporting
50 person is a member of the armed forces on full-time active duty stationed in Georgia
51 under orders for duties other than attending school. A student establishing residency
52 pursuant to this paragraph shall continue to be considered a resident student, regardless
53 of any transfer of his or her supporting person to an out-of-state duty station, provided
54 that the student maintains continuous enrollment at that institution.

55 (e) The State of Georgia shall waive tuition and fees for each resident service member who
56 enrolls in an exclusively online, degree-offering institution that is associated with a
57 university system institution of higher education.

58 (f) Any public institution of higher education shall consider, in determining whether to
59 award to a student course credit toward a degree or certificate offered by the institution for
60 the student's completion of certain military training:

61 (1) Any official military record presented to the institution by the student that:

62 (A) Describes the substance of the training completed by the student; and

63 (B) Verifies the student's successful completion of that training; and

64 (2) Whether the substance of that training satisfies the purpose of the course for which
65 the student seeks credit as described in the institution's course catalog.

66 (g)(1) The Department of Veterans Service shall evaluate programs of study or courses
67 offered by a university system public institution of higher education or public

68 postsecondary program leading to industry-based certifications or other workforce
69 credentials to identify programs or courses for which skills obtained through military
70 experience, education, and training frequently align.

71 (2) The department shall publish on its website a list of any programs of study or courses
72 identified by the department under this subsection and the relevant military experience,
73 education, or training that may align with those programs or courses.

74 (3) The department shall identify, develop, and support methods to facilitate the award
75 of course time credit by a university system public institution of higher education or
76 public postsecondary program or other private or nonprofit entities providing programs
77 of study or courses of instruction leading to industry certifications or other workforce
78 credentials to veterans and military service members for military experience, education,
79 or training obtained during military service for programs of study or courses of
80 instruction offered by those schools, colleges, or other entities for which skills obtained
81 through military experience, education, and training align.

82 (h) The Department of Veterans Service shall cooperate with the proper officials of the
83 State Board of Education, the Department of Education, the State School Superintendent,
84 the Board of Regents and the Chancellor of the University System of Georgia, and all other
85 public education authorities, private schools, colleges, and universities of the state which
86 are not under the official jurisdiction of the public educational authorities of the state in the
87 placing of veterans at such institutions for education and training and shall enable
88 participating colleges and institutions to apply specialized education and training
89 requirements toward requirements for an associate's degree in nursing or a bachelor's
90 degree in nursing and licensure as a licensed practical nurse or registered nurse. The
91 collaborating entities will also create a plan to promote and market these opportunities
92 available for veterans in order to aid:

93 (1) Educational institutions in designing and obtaining funding through federal, state, or
94 private grants for gap-bridging Veteran Associate of Science in Nursing degrees or
95 Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree programs; and
96 (2) Service members in identifying prospective requirements for licensure as a licensed
97 practical nurse or registered nurse through either a Veteran Associate of Science in
98 Nursing degree or a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree program."

99

SECTION 2.

100 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.