

ASSEMBLY MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 3143

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 6, 2024

The Assembly Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 3143.

This bill broadens the eligibility for certain veterans' benefits by eliminating the requirement that a veteran serve during specific wars or other periods of emergency, and, in certain instances, that a veteran serve in a war zone. Instead of service during specific dates or in specific locations, the bill requires a veteran to serve for at least 90 days, exclusive of certain types of initial training, in order to be eligible for any of the veterans' benefits identified in the bill. The bill also requires a veteran of a Reserve Component of the United States Armed Forces, including the National Guard, to serve the entire period to which called to federal active service, exclusive of training, in order to be eligible for the veterans' benefits. A veteran who is discharged as the result of a service-connected disability will be eligible even if the veteran has not completed the 90 day service period or the period to which called to federal active service.

The benefits that an eligible veteran could apply for are (1) a civil service hiring preference under Title 11A of the New Jersey Statutes; (2) a veteran's retirement allowance under the Teachers' Pension and Annuity Fund (TPAF) or the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS); and (3) the purchase of additional military service credit in the Police and Firemen's Retirement System (PFRS), TPAF and PERS. In addition, the surviving spouse of a veteran or of a member of the Armed Forces of the United States or a Reserve Component thereof killed while in active service is eligible in certain instances for a civil service preference.

The bill also provides that an active service member of the United States Armed Forces or a member of a Reserve Component thereof, including the National Guard, who has not been discharged from service is eligible for the civil service hiring preference provided that the member otherwise qualifies as a veteran.

Eligibility for civil service hiring preference is contingent upon voter approval of an authorizing amendment to the State Constitution.

This bill was prefiled for introduction in the 2024-2025 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.