

ASSEMBLY MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 4878

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JANUARY 23, 2025

The Assembly Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 4878.

This bill extends certain options in regard to grades to dependents of service members enrolled in public institutions of higher education who cannot complete a course due to an unplanned military obligation of the service member. The bill also clarifies the scope of existing grade options and establishes additional grade options.

Under current law, a student enrolled in a public institution of higher education who is unable to complete a course due to a deployment, mobilization, reassignment, or other military obligation as a service member has four options in regard to the grade for the course. If the student has completed at least eight weeks of the course, the student may choose to receive a (1) letter grade; (2) pass or fail grade; (3) grade of incomplete; or (4) withdrawal. If the student has completed fewer than eight weeks of the course, the student's options are limited to choosing between receiving an incomplete grade and withdrawing from the course. Current law also specifies that a student who accepts a grade of pass or fail may, within a year of returning to the institution, complete the course work to receive a letter grade.

Under the bill, these grade options are to also be made available to the dependents of the service member. The bill defines a "dependent" as a dependent child or spouse of the service member.

The bill clarifies that the deployment, mobilization, reassignment or other military obligation preventing the service member or dependent from completing the course be unplanned.

The bill also changes the demarcating line of course completion from eight weeks to 55 percent of the duration of the course. If the service member or dependent has completed 55 percent of the duration of the course, receipt of a letter grade would only be granted if the faculty member teaching the course determines that the service member or dependent has completed sufficient work, and there is sufficient evidence of progress toward meeting the requirements of the course, to justify the grade. A grade of pass or fail would also be based on whether the faculty member determines the member or dependent completed sufficient work and there is sufficient evidence of meeting the course requirements. The bill also adds the options of

receiving a temporary grade or transferring into an equivalent online section of the course when available and with appropriate approval. The options are to be subject to the approval of the teacher, department, registrar, or appropriate office at the institution.

If the service member or dependent has completed less than 55 percent of the duration of the course, the service member or dependent may receive an incomplete for the grade only if the faculty member teaching the course determines that the student or dependent has completed sufficient work, and there is sufficient evidence of progress toward meeting the requirements of the course, to justify the grade. The service member or dependent also has an added option of transferring into an equivalent online section of the course when available and with appropriate approval. The options shall be subject to the approval of the teacher, department, registrar, or appropriate office at the institution.

Finally, the bill specifies that the service member or dependent who initially chose to accept a pass or fail grade, but subsequently returns to the institution within a year to complete course work to receive a letter grade, may contact the faculty member who taught the course, the academic chair of the department offering the course, the registrar, or the appropriate office at the institution to establish a plan for completing the course work to receive the grade.