
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 1004 Session of
2013

INTRODUCED BY BAKER, TEPLITZ, KITCHEN, STACK, WASHINGTON,
RAFFERTY, SCHWANK, YUDICHAK, WOZNIAK, HUGHES, FERLO,
TOMLINSON, COSTA, ERICKSON, VULAKOVICH, FONTANA, SOLOBAY,
BREWSTER, FARNESE AND TARTAGLIONE, JUNE 24, 2013

REFERRED TO EDUCATION, JUNE 24, 2013

AN ACT

1 Providing for duties of certain institutions of higher education
2 relating to services for veterans and for the powers and
3 duties of the Department of Education.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. Short title.

7 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Developing
8 Opportunities in Veterans' Education Act.

9 Section 2. Definitions.

10 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
11 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
12 context clearly indicates otherwise:

13 "Department." The Department of Education of the
14 Commonwealth.

15 "Institution of higher education." A public or private
16 university, college or community college in this Commonwealth.

17 Section 3. Duties of institutions of higher education.

1 An institution of higher education shall:

2 (1) Designate a single point of contact, from whom
3 service members and veterans can receive help with admission,
4 benefits, peer mentoring and other academic, social, personal
5 and financial needs.

6 (2) Post its service members' and veterans' services and
7 programs on its publicly accessible Internet website, in its
8 campus brochure and other readily accessible information
9 sources.

10 (3) Post its service members and veterans withdrawal
11 policies for mobilization and deployment and credit transfer
12 on its publicly accessible Internet website and other readily
13 accessible points, and use an "M" on formal transcripts to
14 denote a mobilization. The use of "withdrawal" or
15 "incomplete" on the formal transcripts of mobilized service
16 members and veterans is prohibited.

17 (4) Track service members and veterans through the
18 application and enrollment process and report the number of
19 service members and veterans enrolled to the Office of
20 Veterans Services within the department by December 31 of
21 each year.

22 (5) Use guidelines developed by the department to adopt
23 policies for the awarding of academic credit to service
24 members and veterans for military education, training and
25 experience in accordance with the Guide to the Evaluation of
26 Educational Experiences in the Armed Services, published by
27 the American Council on Education.

28 Section 4. Duties of department.

29 The Office of Veterans Services in the department shall:

30 (1) Track and report the number of service members and

1 veterans enrolled at institutions of higher education to the
2 Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee and the
3 Education Committee of the Senate and the Veterans Affairs
4 and Emergency Preparedness Committee and the Education
5 Committee of the House of Representatives by June 30 of each
6 year.

7 (2) Post on its Internet website its best practices
8 manual on veterans education.

9 (3) Develop a program to certify institutions of higher
10 education as "Devoted to Our Veterans" Campuses based on
11 their military-friendly or veteran-supportive programs and
12 services.

13 (4) Develop guidelines for institutions of higher
14 education to award academic credit to certain students for
15 military education, training and experience.

16 Section 5. "Devoted to Our Veterans" Campuses.

17 (a) General rule.--An institution of higher education may
18 submit an application to the department to be certified as a
19 "Devoted to Our Veterans" Campus. The department shall maintain
20 a list of certified "Devoted to Our Veterans" campuses on its
21 publicly accessible Internet website. The department shall make
22 a reasonable effort to notify institutions of higher education
23 that they can be certified as a "Devoted to Our Veterans"
24 Campus.

25 (b) Criteria.--An institution of higher education shall be
26 certified as a "Devoted to Our Veterans" Campus if the
27 institution of higher education submits an application to the
28 department and demonstrates at least three of the following
29 criteria:

30 (1) A campus survey of service members and student

1 service members and veterans to identify needs.

2 (2) A campus steering committee consisting of student-
3 veterans, faculty and staff to identify needs, make
4 recommendations for improvements and share best practices for
5 supporting student service members and veterans.

6 (3) Sensitivity and awareness training on military and
7 veterans' culture, including issues related to Traumatic
8 Brain Injury, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, suicide and
9 physical and mental disabilities.

10 (4) Student-veteran orientation programs, including
11 student-veteran guides for the first day on campus, an
12 optional student-veterans' orientation session and at least
13 one optional veterans-only course taught by a veteran or
14 trained volunteer on veterans' issues.

15 (5) Peer mentoring and peer support programs for
16 student-veterans and service members.

17 (6) Outreach strategies to local military bases.

18 (7) A centrally located, one-stop resource and student
19 center on campus for student-veterans, their families and
20 student family members of the United States Armed Forces who
21 are currently deployed.

22 (8) Community-based collaboration efforts to allow the
23 private sector to support veterans resource centers through
24 financial aid and in-kind gifts.

25 Section 6. Effective date.

26 This act shall take effect in 60 days.