

Senate Bill No. 479

(By Senators Unger, Kessler (Mr. President), Stollings, Cookman,
Yost, Fitzsimmons, Wells and Cann)

[Introduced February 4, 2014; referred to the Committee on
Education; and then to the Committee on Finance.]

**FISCAL
NOTE**

A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by
adding thereto a new section, designated §18-2B-6; and to
amend said code by adding thereto a new article, designated
§18B-20-1 and §18B-20-2, all relating to providing military
veterans with vocational certification, licensure or college
credit for military training and experience that is close to
what they would gain in a corresponding educational setting.

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 §18-2B-6; and that said
code be amended by adding thereto a new article, designated §18B-
20-1 and §18B-20-2, all to read as follows:

CHAPTER 18. EDUCATION.**ARTICLE 2B. AREA VOCATIONAL PROGRAM.**

§18-2B-6. Vocational certification for military training and experience.

(a) The Legislature finds that veterans returning from the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq face unique challenges in coming home. One of these challenges is finding good career opportunities that allow veterans to provide for themselves and their loved ones. Upon returning home, many veterans have already developed skills suitable to many jobs that require vocational certification and licensure. Rather than make these veterans take classes for skills they have already developed, the Legislature finds it is in these veterans' best interest to provide them with certification or licensure so that they may obtain employment in their area of skill.

(b) The Division of Vocational Education shall propose legislative rules pertaining to a policy and procedure for the acceptance of credit toward certification or licensure programs administered by the division if an applicant provides satisfactory evidence of successful completion of relevant military education, training, or service as a member of the Armed Forces of the United States, the United States Reserves, the National Guard of any state, the Military Reserves of any state, or the Naval Militia of any state.

CHAPTER 18B. HIGHER EDUCATION.

1 **ARTICLE 20. COLLEGE CREDIT FOR MILITARY TRAINING.**

2 **§18B-20-1. Legislative findings.**

3 The Legislature finds that veterans returning from the
4 conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq face unique challenges in coming
5 home. One of these challenges is finding good career opportunities
6 that allow veterans to provide for themselves and their loved ones.
7 Upon returning home, many veterans have already acquired knowledge
8 similar to what they would gain in many college classrooms. In
9 fact, many veterans already have college experience. Between 2000
10 and 2009 statistics from the Veterans Administration showed that
11 over thirty percent of veterans had some college experience while
12 just over twenty-five percent of the general population did.
13 Unfortunately, fewer veterans end up graduating from college than
14 civilians for a variety of reasons. This Legislature finds that one
15 way to make up the gap between veterans and civilians graduating
16 from college is to give veterans college credit for classes where
17 their military service and training has already provided them with
18 the same knowledge they would gain in the classroom.

19 **§18B-20-2. College credit for military training and experience.**

20 The State Higher Education Policy Commission shall propose
21 legislative rules pertaining to a policy and procedure for the
22 acceptance of academic credit toward a degree or technical program
23 offered by public baccalaureate and graduate institutions if an
24 applicant provides satisfactory evidence of successful completion

1 of relevant military education, training, or service as a member of
2 the Armed Forces of the United States, the United States Reserves,
3 the National Guard of any state, the Military Reserves of any
4 state, or the Naval Militia of any state.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to provide veterans with vocational certification or licensure or college credit for military training and experience that is close to what they would gain in the educational setting.

All sections in this bill are new; therefore, strike-throughs and underscoring have been omitted.