

Date of Hearing: July 3, 2012

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
Marty Block, Chair
ACR 159 (Gorell and Ma) – As Introduced: June 11, 2012

SUBJECT: Postsecondary education: military veterans.

SUMMARY: Encourages California Community Colleges (CCC), the California State University (CSU), and the University of California (UC) to consider and adopt the American Council on Education (ACE) credit recommendations to give veterans credit for their military experience. Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Makes numerous declarations and findings, including the following:
 - a) Veterans represent a broad spectrum of our society that include older students with work and family responsibilities, students whose college entry has been delayed, first-generation students, and students with lower and middle socioeconomic statuses.
 - b) Veterans have gained valuable skills through their military training and combat experience; and that some of this experience is firsthand experience in much needed professions such as emergency medicine, engineering, and law enforcement.
 - c) More than 2,300 colleges and universities recognize the American Council on Education (ACE) endorsed transcripts, and that ACE credit recommendations are strong indicators of military experience and knowledge acquired that should be counted toward college credit.
 - d) The adoption of ACE credit recommendations will result in more veterans graduating from a public postsecondary education institution, and will help ensure the success of our veterans at our public postsecondary education institutions.
- 2) Recognizes that the California State Assembly and Senate value military service.
- 3) Encourages CCC, CSU, and UC to consider and adopt ACE credit recommendations.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown. This resolution is tagged non-fiscal.

COMMENTS: Background. In California, an approximate 30,000 troops annually are leaving military service, and many are pursuing postsecondary education. Student veteran enrollment has increased at UC, CSU, and CCC in recent years: CCC enrolls 44,000 students who utilize some form of veteran tuition/fee benefit, while CSU enrolls 6,540 and UC enrolls 949 students who are using GI benefits. Approximately 90% of UC and CSU student veterans transferred from a CCC campus.

Recent hearing on student veteran issues. On February 28, 2012, the Assembly Higher Education and Assembly Veterans Affairs Committees held a joint oversight hearing on the challenges facing California student veterans. Several students and representatives from the higher education institutions spoke to the need for more resources for veterans' services,

including more transition assistance, improving outreach and campus-based programs, and easing the matriculation of prior military learning.

Need for this bill. According to the authors, “Military veterans are finding it very difficult to transfer the training they have received into college credits, requiring that they repeat education that they have already received in pursuit of their college degrees. Many colleges and universities claim that it would be very expensive for them to review all military training programs and develop appropriate rules for assigning appropriate college credit for the training. However, the American Council on Education has already developed recommendations for the transfer of military education into college credits that have been adopted by over 2300 colleges”.

ACE Guide. According to ACE, their organization began working with the military in 1945 and currently has more than 2,300 colleges and universities that recognize ACE-endorsed transcripts as official documentation of military experiences and accurate records of applicable ACE credit recommendations.

ACE works with branches of the armed forces in automatically articulating that credit on official transcripts. These transcripts are automatically available to servicemembers, and list personal student data, courses, and occupations evaluated by ACE, including descriptions, learning outcomes, and equivalent college credit recommendations, as well as national college-level exam results, and are available at no charge to servicemembers. Army servicemembers (active, reserve, and National Guard) receive the Army/ACE Registry Transcript System (AARTS) transcripts while Navy and Marine Corps servicemembers (active and reserve) receive the Sailor/Marine/ACE Registry Transcript (SMART). Coast Guard servicemembers can obtain record with ACE recommendations through the Coast Guard Institute.

The U.S. Air Force created the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) in 1972, gained regional accreditation in 1973, and the authority to grant associate degrees in 1977. CCAF awards academic credit and degrees to enlisted servicemembers for their training and issues transcripts. While CCAF transcripts are not automatically ACE evaluated, the transcript may be used to request transfer of credit to another institution or to otherwise document college credit.

Segments' policies. UC and CSU have recently adopted the ACE standards for evaluating prior military academic credit, though this credit is typically granted toward elective requirements. In spring 2011, the CCC statewide Academic Senate passed a resolution urging local senates to apply credit for educational experiences during military service toward the associate degree in accordance with the recommendations listed in the ACE Guide.

Technical amendments. The author has requested technical amendments, changing "education" to "educational" in two instances.

Prior legislation. Several authors have introduced legislation relating to academic credit for prior military service. AB 372 (Hernández), held under submission in the Senate Appropriations Committee and AB 2462 (Block), pending in the Senate Appropriations Committee, pertain to specific adoption of ACE recommendations for CCC academic credit. AB 2534 (Block), pending in the Senate Appropriations Committee, would establish a CCC pilot program for the purpose of establishing career technical education programs that leverage prior military service training and potential ACE evaluation of that credit.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file.

Opposition

None on file.

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