

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2018 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

Senate Bill 509

(Senator Waugh, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Ways and Means

Community Colleges - Veterans Advisors and Veterans Resource Centers -
Established

This bill requires each community college to employ a veterans advisor and establish a veterans resource center on campus. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2018.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Baltimore City Community College (BCCC) operations and finances are not materially affected. As discussed below, the bill generally codifies existing practice.

Local Effect: Local community college operations and finances are not materially affected. As discussed below, the bill generally codifies existing practice.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The veterans advisor must provide comprehensive and intensive enrollment and advising services to current and prospective students who are veterans. Veterans resource centers are established to (1) provide access to federal and State veterans resources; (2) serve as a quiet place for veterans to study; (3) enable veterans to connect to other veterans; and (4) be the central hub for all activities on campus related to veterans.

Current Law/Background: While there is no existing law specifically enumerating the requirements in the bill, in January 2011, 21 State public institutions of higher education entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in which each institution agreed to provide certain veterans support services. Of that total, 13 were community colleges and

8 were four-year institutions. Chapters 413 and 414 of 2016 established the Maryland College Collaboration for Student Veterans Commission in the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs. The commission is required to work with institutions of higher education in the State to, among other things, provide the following services, as described in the 2011 MOU:

- a designated “one door” office that coordinates veteran services and supports;
- awareness of veteran reintegration challenges;
- communication and coordination of available veteran services;
- behavioral health services;
- financial aid and GI Bill support services; and
- peer support groups.

Further, the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) advises that all community colleges have established a veterans resource center. Most community colleges also have one, and many have more than one, veteran-related advisory staff. Many of the community colleges are working with local, State, and federal partners to provide professional resources and referring their students to external resources for mental health and medical issues.

MHEC offers an annual four-hour training session designed to address responsibilities in certifying students using veterans educational assistance benefits. Regional [training conferences](#) also address veterans educational benefits and provide an overview of other federal veterans resources.

State/Local Fiscal Effect: As noted above, according to MHEC, all community colleges have established a veterans resource center and most have at least one advisory staff. Therefore, as the bill generally codifies existing practice, the operations and finances of the State’s 16 community colleges, including BCCC, are not materially affected.

This estimate assumes that one veterans resource center per community college is sufficient to meet the bill’s requirements. Many community colleges have several smaller satellite campuses; the bill does not require a veterans resource center on *each* campus. Requiring community colleges to establish and staff a veterans resource center on *each* campus would significantly increase expenditures associated with the bill.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 689 (Delegate McIntosh, *et al.*) - Ways and Means.

Information Source(s): Maryland Higher Education Commission; Baltimore City Community College; Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs; Maryland Association of Community Colleges; College of Southern Maryland; Hagerstown Community College; U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Department of Legislative Services

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