

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 23, 2014

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2013–14 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1518

Introduced by Assembly Member Eggman
(Principal coauthor: Assembly Member Olsen)
(Principal coauthor: Senator Galgiani)

January 16, 2014

An act to amend Section 532 of the Military and Veterans Code, relating to the military.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1518, as amended, Eggman. Military: National Guard: youth challenge program.

Existing law authorizes the Adjutant General of the California Military Department to establish a military academy to be operated as a charter school or existing alternative education option available under the Education Code, to provide a structured, disciplined environment that is conducive to learning and developing academic skills, leadership, self-esteem, and a strong sense of community. Existing law provides that a new California National Guard Youth Program, except for the California Cadet Corps, may be established as provided by this section only if funds are appropriated for purposes of the new program in the annual Budget Act or any other act.

This bill would, subject to this condition, authorize the Adjutant General, subject to an appropriation for this purpose, to establish a National Guard Youth Challenge Program which would provide at least a 22-week residential program and a 12-month post-residential mentoring period to improve life skills and employment potential of participants. The program would accept federal funding, and the Military

Department would be required to enter into a memorandum of agreement with an appropriate school district or county office of education for the purpose of providing educational services. The school district or county office of education would be responsible for ensuring compliance with any applicable requirements imposed pursuant to the Education Code.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no.
 State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 ~~SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the~~
 2 ~~following:~~
 3 ~~(a) The National Guard ChalleNGe Program’s mission is to~~
 4 ~~intervene and reclaim the lives of 16- to 18-year old high school~~
 5 ~~dropouts. ChalleNGe programs across the nation are producing~~
 6 ~~graduates with the values, life skills, education, and self-discipline~~
 7 ~~necessary to succeed as productive citizens. ChalleNGe programs~~
 8 ~~are funded with a 75 percent annual investment by the federal~~
 9 ~~government and a matching 25 percent investment from the state.~~
 10 ~~A study by the Rand Corporation determined that the National~~
 11 ~~Guard’s Youth ChalleNGe Program is the most effective program~~
 12 ~~of its type in the country, with a return on investment of \$2.33 for~~
 13 ~~every dollar spent.~~
 14 ~~(b) California has two of the most decorated National Guard~~
 15 ~~Youth ChalleNGe Programs in the country, routinely winning~~
 16 ~~national awards for effectiveness and achievement. California’s~~
 17 ~~first Youth ChalleNGe program, the Grizzly Youth Academy, was~~
 18 ~~established in 1998 at Camp San Luis Obispo. The program was~~
 19 ~~established as a partnership between the California Military~~
 20 ~~Department and the San Luis Obispo County Office of Education~~
 21 ~~and operates as a charter public high school. Building on the~~
 22 ~~success of the Grizzly Youth Academy, California’s second Youth~~
 23 ~~ChalleNGe program, the Sunburst Youth Academy was established~~
 24 ~~in 2007 at the Joint Forces Training Base at Los Alamitos as a~~
 25 ~~partnership between the California Military Department and the~~
 26 ~~Orange County Department of Education and operates as a public~~
 27 ~~community high school. These academies serve at-risk youth from~~
 28 ~~southern California and the central coast, a majority of whom come~~
 29 ~~from predominantly inner city neighborhoods. The two ChalleNGe~~
 30 ~~programs graduate an average of 800 teens per year.~~

1 ~~(e) When a student drops out of high school it is a great personal~~
2 ~~loss, in terms of missed potential, potential lifetime earnings, and~~
3 ~~is also a loss for society. A person who has dropped out of high~~
4 ~~school will earn an average of half as much as their peers who~~
5 ~~graduated, faces a current joblessness rate of 50 percent, and is~~
6 ~~three times more likely to serve a prison sentence than they would~~
7 ~~have had they graduated. The public cost, calculated over the~~
8 ~~working life of each person who dropped out of high school, is~~
9 ~~more than \$292,000 in lower tax revenues, higher cash and in-kind~~
10 ~~transfer costs, and imposed incarceration costs relative to an~~
11 ~~average high school graduate.~~

12 ~~(d) The correlation between high rates of dropout and crime is~~
13 ~~clearly demonstrated in communities of need. For example, the~~
14 ~~high school dropout rate in San Joaquin County is 15.4 percent,~~
15 ~~exceeding the statewide average of 13.1 percent. San Joaquin~~
16 ~~County also leads the state's other counties in youth and young~~
17 ~~adult homicides, with a per capita rate nearly three times~~
18 ~~California's overall rate. This is an enormous and tragic cost in~~
19 ~~lives, and it is imperative to respond with all effective measures~~
20 ~~to stanch this loss.~~

21 ~~(e) It is the intent of the Legislature to implement a California~~
22 ~~National Guard ChalleNGe program to serve at-risk teens.~~

23 ~~SEC. 2.~~

24 ~~SECTION 1.~~ Section 532 of the Military and Veterans Code
25 is amended to read:

26 532. (a) (1) Subject to subdivision (b), the Adjutant General
27 may enter into a cooperative agreement with the governing board
28 of a school district or a county office of education for the purpose
29 of establishing, pursuant to existing statutory authority in the
30 Education Code, a military academy to be operated as a charter
31 school, pursuant to Part 26.8 (commencing with Section 47600)
32 of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Education Code, or as one of the
33 existing alternative education options, available under the
34 Education Code. The program would provide a structured,
35 disciplined environment that would be conducive to learning in a
36 college preparatory environment. In addition to academic skills,
37 students would develop leadership, self-esteem, and a strong sense
38 of community. An academy established pursuant to this section
39 shall comply with the Education Code.

1 (2) Pursuant to Section 509 of Title 32 of the United States
2 Code and subject to subdivision (b), the Adjutant General shall
3 conduct a civilian youth opportunities program, to be known as
4 the “National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program,” which shall
5 consist of at least a 22-week residential program and a 12-month
6 post-residential mentoring period. The program shall serve at risk
7 teens in areas of the state, including, but not limited to, the San
8 Joaquin Valley and Northern California, and shall be subject to
9 all of the following:

10 (A) The program shall seek to improve life skills and
11 employment potential of participants by providing military-based
12 leadership development, promoting fellowship and community
13 service, developing life-coping skills and job skills, improving
14 physical fitness, providing health and hygiene training, and
15 assisting participants to receive a high school diploma or its
16 equivalent.

17 (B) The Adjutant General may accept federal funding to
18 implement a National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program. The
19 Adjutant General may appoint a director and other service members
20 and employees, permanent or temporary, to operate the program.

21 (C) The Military Department shall enter into a memorandum
22 of agreement with an appropriate school district or a county office
23 of education for the purpose of providing educational services for
24 students enrolled in a National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program.
25 The school district or county office of education with which the
26 department contracts shall be responsible for ensuring compliance
27 with any applicable requirements imposed by the Education Code.

28 (b) A new program, except for the California Cadet Corps, may
29 only be established as provided in subdivision (a) if funds are
30 appropriated for purposes of the program in the annual Budget Act
31 or any other act.