

Assembly Bill No. 1781

CHAPTER 207

An act to amend Section 69999.16 of the Education Code, relating to postsecondary education.

[Approved by Governor August 15, 2014. Filed with
Secretary of State August 15, 2014.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1781, Linder. California National Guard Education Assistance Award Program.

Existing law establishes the California National Guard Education Assistance Award Program, which provides financial aid to qualifying members of the California National Guard, the State Military Reserve, and the Naval Militia, under the administration of the Student Aid Commission, in consultation with the Military Department. Existing law provides that a qualifying member is eligible to receive an award if, among other conditions, the person enrolls in at least 3 academic units per semester, or the equivalent thereof.

This bill would require a qualifying member, to be eligible to receive an award for a summer session turn, to also submit a letter from his or her unit commander that states that the summer session will not adversely impact the member's attendance at mandatory military training. The bill also would state the intent of the Legislature relating to these provisions.

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

SECTION 1. It is the intent of the Legislature to build upon the success of the California National Guard Education Award Assistance Program by providing student-soldiers more flexibility in achieving their academic goals.

SEC. 2. Section 69999.16 of the Education Code is amended to read:

69999.16. (a) Commencing January 1 of the 2009–10 academic year, and each academic year thereafter, any qualifying member of the California National Guard, the State Military Reserve, or the Naval Militia may apply for a California National Guard Education Assistance Award.

(b) (1) A qualifying member shall meet all of the following conditions to be eligible to receive a California National Guard Education Assistance Award:

(A) The person is a resident within the meaning of Section 68017.

(B) The person is an active member of, and has served two years in, the California National Guard, the State Military Reserve, or the Naval Militia.

(C) The person has been accepted or registered at, or enrolled in, a qualifying institution, as defined in subdivision (I) of Section 69432.7.

(D) The person agrees to use the award to obtain a certificate, degree, or diploma that he or she does not hold at the time he or she applies for the award, and enrolls in at least three academic units per semester, or the equivalent thereof.

(E) The person has submitted the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to the United States Department of Education.

(2) To be eligible for an award for a summer session term, a qualifying member who meets the conditions in paragraph (1) shall submit a letter from his or her unit commander that states that the member's enrollment in that summer session will not adversely impact the member's attendance at mandatory military training.

(c) Each person applying for a California National Guard Education Assistance Award shall submit an application for an award to the Adjutant General.

(d) The Adjutant General shall do all of the following:

(1) Annually identify the skills most needed by the California National Guard to retain members who possess, or seek to possess, those identified skills.

(2) Prioritize those applicants who qualify for an award pursuant to subdivision (b) based on the skills most needed by the California National Guard, as identified pursuant to paragraph (1).

(3) Select award recipients from among eligible applicants pursuant to subdivision (e).

(4) Certify the eligibility of applicants to the Student Aid Commission.

(5) Notify recipients of their selection for an award.

(e) The Adjutant General shall select recipients who have been judged by the Adjutant General to have outstanding ability on the basis of criteria that may include, but shall not be limited to, any of the following:

(1) The Military Occupational Specialty Code or the Air Force Specialty Code.

(2) An annual noncommissioned officer evaluation report or officer evaluation report of the preceding two years.

(3) A memorandum from the applicant's commander recommending the applicant for the award.

(4) Commendations the applicant has received.

(5) An essay, written by the applicant, explaining why education is important to the applicant.

(f) The number of awards issued by the Student Aid Commission in any fiscal year shall be limited to the number authorized in the annual Budget Act for that year, but in no event shall exceed 1,000 in any fiscal year.

(g) The Student Aid Commission shall issue the awards in accordance with Section 69999.18.