

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2024 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 681

BY SENATORS WELD, TAKUBO, DEEDS, AND MARONEY

[Introduced February 7, 2024; referred
to the Committee on Military]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §15-1B-21 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating
2 to the service obligation for tuition and fees for a doctor of medicine or doctor of
3 osteopathic medicine degree program.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 1B. NATIONAL GUARD.

§15-1B-21. Tuition and fees for guard members at institutions of higher education.

1 (a) Any member of the Army National Guard or Air National Guard who is enrolled in an
2 educational program which leads to a certificate, undergraduate degree, master's degree, doctor
3 of medicine, or doctor of osteopathic medicine, and is attending any accredited community and
4 technical college, college, university, or business, career-technical, vocational, trade, or aviation
5 school, located in West Virginia, may be entitled to payment of tuition and fees for that program
6 during the period of his or her service in the National Guard.

7 (1) The Adjutant General may prescribe criteria of eligibility for payment of tuition and fees.
8 The payment is contingent upon appropriations being made by the Legislature for the express
9 purpose of this section.

10 (2) A member may receive payment for only one certificate, undergraduate degree, and
11 master's degree pursuant to this section.

12 (3) Not more than two members a year may be selected by the Adjutant General to receive
13 payment for either a doctor of medicine or doctor of osteopathic medicine degree program. Any
14 candidate selected for this program must remain a member of the Army National Guard or the Air
15 National Guard ~~and practice medicine in the state of West Virginia for a minimum of 10 years after~~
16 receiving a doctor of medicine or doctor of osteopathic medicine degree for a mandatory service
17 obligation as prescribed by the Adjutant General, or be subject to recoupment for all moneys paid
18 pursuant to this subdivision.

19 (b) The amount of the payment for a member attending a state-supported school is
20 determined by the Adjutant General and may not exceed the actual cost of tuition and fees at the

21 school. The amount of the payment for a member attending a private school is determined by the
22 Adjutant General and may not exceed the highest amount payable at any state-supported school.

23 (c) Any member of the Army National Guard or Air National Guard who is receiving
24 payments under a federally funded continuing education system and is eligible to receive tuition
25 and fee payments pursuant to this section may be entitled to payment of tuition and fees under
26 this section. The sum of payments received under this section and a federally funded continuing
27 education system may not exceed the actual amount of tuition and fees at the school and in any
28 event may not exceed the highest amount payable at any state-supported school. If a member of
29 the Army National Guard or Air National Guard uses education benefits that are administered by
30 the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, such as the Post 9/11 GI Bill or any other program that
31 pays tuition or fees directly to the institutions of higher education, the institution of higher
32 education shall first assess the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for payment of tuition and
33 fees payable by those programs, with the remaining tuition and fees, if any, then being payable
34 in accordance with this section.

35 (d) For any member of the West Virginia Army National Guard or West Virginia Air National
36 Guard who is participating in the PROMISE Scholarship program provided in §18C-7-1 *et seq.* of
37 this code, the Adjutant General may pay directly to the member an amount equal to the amount
38 of tuition and fees which otherwise would have been paid to the school.

39 (e) A member of the West Virginia Army National Guard or West Virginia Air National
40 Guard who is receiving payments for tuition and fees under this section and is discharged from
41 the military service due to wounds or injuries received in the line of duty may continue to receive
42 payments for tuition and fees under this section as if he or she were still a member.

43 (f) The Adjutant General shall administer the tuition and fee payments authorized under
44 this section and shall establish policies to implement the provisions of this section.