

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2023 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 2932

By Delegate C. Pritt

[Introduced January 23, 2023; Referred to the
Committee on Education then the Judiciary]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §18-5-48 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to
 2 allowing county boards of education to employ armed veterans for the purpose of
 3 protecting West Virginia schools.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 5. COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION.

§18-5-48. Safety and security measures for school facilities; Safe Schools Fund created.

1 (a) Each county board of education and multicounty vocational center shall annually
 2 assess the safety and security of each of the school facilities within its boundaries. Safety and
 3 security measures of each facility shall be upgraded when necessary to ensure, to the best of the
 4 county board's ability, the safety of the students within each facility. Each county board of
 5 education shall report annually the safety and security measures it has put in place, including
 6 upgrades thereto, to the State Department of Education. Annually, the State Department of
 7 Education shall compile the information from the county boards of education and report the
 8 information to the Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability.

9 (b) As used in this section, "safety and security measures" means action taken by a county
 10 board of education or multicounty vocational center that improves the security of a school facility
 11 and the safety of the students within such facility, including, but not limited to, hiring a school
 12 resource officer, installing weapon detection systems, upgrading facility doors or windows.

13 (c) There is hereby created in the State Treasury a special revenue fund to be known as
 14 the Safe Schools Fund. The fund shall consist of all moneys received from legislative
 15 appropriations and other sources to further the purpose of this section: *Provided*, That annually,
 16 the West Virginia Department of Education shall request an appropriation based on the requests
 17 of the county boards of education. Subject to legislative appropriation, the funds appropriated
 18 annually to the School Safety Fund shall be distributed to the county boards of education and
 19 multicounty vocational centers, with the funding amount per school determined by dividing the
 20 total annual appropriation by the total number of public schools throughout the state. All moneys

21 distributed from this fund shall be used to support the purpose and intent of this section and all
22 moneys must be spent to support the school for which the funding was derived: *Provided*,
23 *however*, That moneys distributed from this fund also may be used for the purposes of §18-20-11
24 of this code, relating to video cameras in certain special education classrooms: *Provided further*,
25 That for any distributions for the 2019-2020 year and continuing until such time that all districts
26 have fully complied with the special education video camera requirements, county boards shall
27 have the flexibility to spend the safe schools allocation at any school within the district requiring
28 cameras in special education classrooms. The West Virginia Department of Education shall first
29 allocate the funding appropriated for the Safe Schools Fund for the 2020-2021 year based on the
30 remaining need for video cameras in each district. After all districts have been provided sufficient
31 funds to meet the special education video camera requirements, the funding distribution shall
32 return to the previously specified method based on the number of public schools. Any moneys
33 remaining in the fund at the close of the fiscal year shall be carried forward for use in the next fiscal
34 year. Fund balances shall be invested with the state's Consolidated Investment Fund and any and
35 all interest shall be used solely for the purposes that moneys deposited in the fund may be used
36 pursuant to this article.

37 (d) Funding from this section may be used to hire armed veterans for the purposes of
38 protecting West Virginia schools. The veterans shall be used as follows:

39 (1) Before assuming duties, armed veterans hired for protecting schools shall undergo
40 proper training and education and must adhere to a certification process to involve firearms
41 training, de-escalation, and other techniques needed for the security of the schools.

42 (2) The majority of the training shall focus on the protocols and the strategy that military
43 veterans follow whenever a school shooting occurs.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to allow for county boards of education to employ armed veterans to protect West Virginia schools.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.