

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: HJM 1

49th Legislature, 2nd Session, 2010

Tracking Number: .180251.2

Short Title: Study Uniform Military Credit at NM Colleges

Sponsor(s): Representative Nathan P. Cote and Others

Analyst: Ally Hudson

Date: January 31, 2010

Bill Summary:

HJM 1 requests the New Mexico Higher Education Department (HED) to:

- study the benefits and feasibility of establishing uniform standards for accepting military credit and articulation among all colleges and universities in the state; and
- present its findings to the appropriate interim committee of the Legislature by November 2010.

Fiscal Impact:

Legislative memorials do not contain an appropriation.

Fiscal Issues:

According to the HED bill analysis, additional department staff may be required to administer this study.

Substantive Issues:

The HED analysis identifies two arrangements already in place that accomplish some of the purposes of HJM 1.

- The American Council on Education (ACE), created in 1942, evaluates military schools, correspondence courses, and occupations to determine the amount and level of academic credit each should be awarded. Through ACE, academic credit is also awarded for military training. The ACE is funded by the Department of Defense (DoD). It also provides a link between DoD and institutions of higher education (IHE) and provides guidance to IHE's in interpreting military transcripts and documents.
- The Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC) was created in 1972 to provide educational opportunities to service members who, because they frequently moved from place to place, had trouble completing college degrees. SOC functions in cooperation with 15 higher education associations, the DoD, and Active and Reserve components of the military services to expand and improve postsecondary education opportunities for service members worldwide. SOC is funded by the DoD through a contract with the

American Association of State Colleges and Universities. Members of SOC commit to a set of principles and criteria for the acceptance of military credit.

In New Mexico, 15 colleges and universities are part of this consortium.

The HED analysis also notes that the department currently lacks the appropriate staffing and budgetary resources to meet the request outlined in HJM 1.

The analysis by the Public Education Department suggests that the study requested by HJM 1 might lead to agreements allowing dual credit to transfer to a larger group of IHE's.

Background:

According to the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (NMDVS) there are approximately 200,000 veterans in New Mexico. Of those, 30,000 are veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. During the 2007-2008 academic year, approximately 3,500 veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were enrolled in a New Mexico IHE.

Upon discharge, other than dishonorable, veterans are eligible to receive federal educational benefits through either a Montgomery GI Bill worth \$30,000 for a period up to 10 years or the 9/11 GI Bill worth \$40,000 for a period up to 15 years. Both GI bills cover tuition, fees, and books as well as provide a \$1,200 per semester stipend. GI bills may be used to pursue a certificate, baccalaureate, or advanced degree at any IHE.

Related Bills:

HB 24 *Educational Opportunity for Military Children*