



# Ohio Legislative Service Commission

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## Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

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**Bill:** H.B. 488 of the 130th G.A.

**Date:** April 2, 2014

**Status:** As Introduced

**Sponsor:** Reps. Dovilla and Landis

**Local Impact Statement Procedure Required:** No

**Contents:** Veterans' benefits and services

### State Fiscal Highlights

- **Board of Regents and state institutions of higher education.** The Board of Regents and state institutions of higher education may experience an increase in administrative costs to assist and support veterans' access to higher education as required by the bill.
- **Board of Pharmacy.** The bill's provision related to granting pharmacy licensure fee waivers to veterans and active duty members may result in a no more than minimal annual loss in revenues that might otherwise have been deposited in the state treasury to the credit of the Occupational Licensing and Regulatory Fund (Fund 4K90).
- **Department of Veterans Services.** The Department of Veterans Services (DVS) will experience a workload increase related to the new duties prescribed to the Director under the bill, the costs of which are uncertain.
- **State licensing boards.** Licensing agencies may experience a one-time increase in expenditures related to drafting and implementing the rules necessary in order to provide expedited licensing services to veterans, active duty members and their affected spouses.
- **State Approving Agency (DVS) and various state agencies.** The State Approving Agency, housed in the Department of Veterans Services, will likely experience an administrative cost increase in order to process agency approvals for certain federal educational benefits. Those state agencies that are not currently registering with the State Approving Agency may experience a one-time administrative cost increase.

### Local Fiscal Highlights

- No direct fiscal effect on political subdivisions.

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## **Detailed Fiscal Analysis**

### **Veterans' access to higher education**

The bill makes several changes that generally affect higher education benefits for veterans that will require the Board of Regents and state institutions of higher education to take certain actions that may increase their ongoing administrative costs. These changes (which will take place not later than December 31, 2014, unless otherwise noted) are as follows:

1. Requires the Chancellor of the Board of Regents to: (1) develop a set of standards and procedures for the awarding of credit for military training, experience, and coursework, (2) create a military articulation and transfer assurance guide for such credit that is based on the current articulation and transfer policy, (3) create a website that contains specified information related to the awarding of such credit, and (4) develop a statewide training program that prepares faculty and staff to evaluate various military experiences and to award appropriate equivalent credit.
2. Requires all state institutions of higher education, beginning on July 1, 2015, to ensure that appropriate equivalent credit is awarded for military experiences that meet the standards developed by the Chancellor.
3. Requires each state institution of higher education to designate at least one person to serve as the contact person for veterans affairs and to adopt a policy regarding the support and assistance the institution will provide to veterans and requires the Chancellor to provide guidance to state institutions on designating such contact person and adopting such policy.
4. Requires all state institutions of higher education to provide priority course registration for students who are armed forces veterans or service members.
5. Requires each state institution of higher education to establish an appeals procedure for resolving disputes regarding the awarding of college credit for military experience.
6. Prohibits a state institution of higher education, on or after December 31, 2014, from charging a fee to a student who is an armed forces veteran or service member for the evaluation of, transcription of, or application for college credit for military experience.

### **Pharmacy licensing fees waived for veterans and active duty members**

The bill waives the fees associated with the issuance and renewal of a license to practice pharmacy for veterans and active members of the armed forces, within limits that may be established by the Board of Pharmacy. This provision is expected to affect around 25 to 50 licensees a year. The potential annual revenue loss is likely to be

considerably less than \$100,000. This is revenue that would otherwise have been deposited in the state treasury to the credit of the Occupational Licensing and Regulatory Fund (Fund 4K90).

### **Veterans' law definition changes**

The bill establishes a common definition of "member," "veteran," and "armed forces" with respect to the recognition of state offered veterans rights related to: (1) recognition of military training toward the requirements of an occupational license, (2) the grace period for occupational license renewal for veterans, (3) priority for referral to job openings and training opportunities, and (4) extension of continuing education reporting periods. This provision will have no direct fiscal effect on the state or any of its political subdivisions.

### **Additional duties of the Director of Veterans Services**

The bill requires the Director of Veterans Services, not later than December 31, 2014, to: (1) develop and maintain a website that provides links to websites of licensing agencies, (2) encourage state agencies to perform outreach efforts through which veterans and their dependents learn about available job and education benefits, (3) inform state agencies about changes in statutes or rules affecting veterans and their dependents, and (4) assist licensing agencies in adopting rules determining which military training and experience satisfies licensing requirements. The Department of Veterans Services will experience a workload increase related to the new duties described above, the annual costs of which are uncertain.

### **Veterans' priority for license applications**

The bill requires each licensing agency (as defined in R.C. 5903.01), not later than December 31, 2014, to adopt rules to: (1) establish and implement a process to obtain from each applicant documentation and additional information to determine if the applicant is a member or veteran of the armed forces, or the spouse or surviving spouse of a member or veteran, (2) record, track, and monitor these applications, and (3) prioritize or expedite certification and licensing for each such applicant. The bill requires a licensing agency to include, in the rules, special accommodations for applicants facing imminent deployment. Licensing agencies may experience a one-time increase in expenditures related to drafting and implementing the rules described above.

### **Veterans' educational benefits – State Approving Agency**

The bill requires, by December 31, 2014, a state agency that issues a license, certificate, or other authorization permitting an individual to engage in an occupation or occupational activity to apply for approval to the State Approving Agency at the Ohio Department of Veterans Services. Such approval is required under federal law to enable an eligible person or veteran to receive education benefits through the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

Those state agencies that are not currently registering with the State Approving Agency may experience a one-time administrative cost increase. The State Approving Agency, housed in the Department of Veterans Services, will likely experience a commensurate administrative cost increase in order to process the approvals.

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