

CHAPTER 2020-80

Committee Substitute for House Bill No. 171

An act relating to postsecondary education for certain military personnel; amending s. 1004.096, F.S.; requiring the Board of Governors and the State Board of Education, in consultation with the Department of Veterans' Affairs, to create a process for the uniform award of postsecondary credit or career education clock hours to certain servicemembers and veterans of the United States Armed Forces; requiring the Articulation Coordinating Committee to convene a workgroup by a specified date; providing for membership and duties of the workgroup; providing administrative support for the workgroup; requiring the workgroup to provide recommendations to the Board of Governors and the State Board of Education by a specified date; requiring the Board of Governors and the State Board of Education to approve the recommendations; requiring the Articulation Coordinating Committee to facilitate the review of courses taken and occupations held by individuals during their service in the military for postsecondary credit and career education clock hours; requiring the Articulation Coordinating Committee to approve and the Board of Governors and the State Board of Education to adopt a specified list within a specified timeframe; requiring delineation of credit and career education clock hours in the statewide articulation agreement; requiring certain postsecondary institutions to award uniform postsecondary credit or career education clock hours for specified courses taken and occupations held by individuals during their service in the military; authorizing the award of additional credits or career education clock hours; requiring certain credits and career education clock hours to transfer between specified postsecondary institutions; amending s. 1009.26, F.S.; requiring specified postsecondary institutions to waive the transcript fee for active duty members of the United States Armed Forces, certain veterans, and their spouses and dependents; providing reporting requirements for such fee waivers; requiring the Board of Governors and the State Board of Education to adopt regulations and rules, respectively; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 1004.096, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1004.096 College credit for military training and education courses.—

(1) In consultation with the Department of Veterans' Affairs, the Board of Governors shall adopt regulations and the State Board of Education shall adopt rules that create a process that enables ~~enable~~ eligible servicemembers or veterans of the United States Armed Forces to earn uniform postsecondary academic college credit across all Florida at public postsecondary educational institutions for college-level training and education acquired in the military. The regulations and rules shall include procedures

for credential evaluation and the uniform award of postsecondary academic college credit or career education clock hours, including, but not limited to, equivalency and alignment of military coursework with appropriate postsecondary college courses and, ~~course descriptions, type and amount~~ of college credit that may be awarded, and transfer of credit.

(2) The Articulation Coordinating Committee shall convene a workgroup by July 15, 2020, which is responsible for developing a process for determining postsecondary course equivalencies and the minimum postsecondary credit or career education clock hours that must be awarded for courses taken and occupations held by individuals during their service in the military.

(a) The workgroup shall be composed of the following 13 members:

1. The chair of the Articulation Coordinating Committee, or his or her designee, who shall serve as chair.

2. Four members representing academic affairs administrators and faculty from state universities, appointed by the chair of the Board of Governors.

3. Four members representing academic affairs administrators and faculty from Florida College System institutions, appointed by the chair of the State Board of Education.

4. Two members representing faculty from career centers, appointed by the State Board of Education.

5. Two members representing veterans, appointed by the executive director of the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

(b) The Office of K-20 Articulation shall provide administrative support for the workgroup.

(c) The workgroup shall establish a process for prioritizing and determining postsecondary course equivalencies and the minimum postsecondary credit or career education clock hours that must be awarded for courses taken and occupations held by individuals during their service in the military. The workgroup shall provide recommendations to the Board of Governors and the State Board of Education by December 1, 2020, for approval at the next meeting of each board to allow for adequate public notice.

(d) Upon approval of the workgroup's recommendations by the Board of Governors and the State Board of Education, the Articulation Coordinating Committee shall facilitate the review of courses taken and occupations held by individuals during their service in the military for postsecondary course equivalencies and the minimum postsecondary credit or career education clock hours that must be awarded in accordance with the approved process.

(e) Within 1 year after approval of the workgroup's recommendations by the Board of Governors and the State Board of Education pursuant to paragraph (c), the Articulation Coordinating Committee shall approve a prioritized list of postsecondary course equivalencies and the minimum postsecondary credit or career education clock hours that must be awarded for courses taken and occupations held by individuals during their service in the military. The list must be updated annually. The Board of Governors and the State Board of Education shall timely adopt the list approved by the Articulation Coordinating Committee at the next meeting of each board to allow for adequate public notice. For the purpose of statewide application, postsecondary course equivalencies and the minimum postsecondary credit or career education clock hours that must be awarded for courses taken and occupations held by individuals during their service in the military shall be delineated by the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors in the statewide articulation agreement required by s. 1007.23(1).

(f) State universities, Florida College System institutions, and career centers must award postsecondary credit or career education clock hours for courses taken and occupations held by individuals during their service in the military based on the list adopted by the Board of Governors and the State Board of Education pursuant to paragraph (e) if the credit or career education clock hours are applicable toward the student's degree or certificate. Institutions may award additional postsecondary credit or career education clock hours if appropriate. Credit or career education clock hours awarded in accordance with minimum postsecondary credit and clock hour requirements, respectively, are guaranteed to transfer to other state universities, Florida College System institutions, and career centers.

Section 2. Subsection (17) is added to section 1009.26, Florida Statutes, to read:

1009.26 Fee waivers.—

(17)(a) Each state university, Florida College System institution, career center operated by a school district under s. 1001.44, and charter technical career center under s. 1002.34 shall waive the transcript fee for a person who is an active duty member or an honorably discharged veteran of the United States Armed Forces and his or her spouse and dependents.

(b) Each state university, Florida College System institution, career center operated by a school district under s. 1001.44, and charter technical career center under s. 1002.34 shall report to the Board of Governors and the State Board of Education, respectively, the number and value of fee waivers granted annually under this subsection.

(c) The Board of Governors and the State Board of Education shall adopt regulations and rules, respectively, to administer this subsection.

Section 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

Approved by the Governor June 23, 2020.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 23, 2020.