

HOUSE BILL NO. 148

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES MILLER, Tuck

Introduced: 2/9/11

Referred: House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs, Education, Finance

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 "An Act establishing the office of military and veteran student assistance at the
2 University of Alaska; relating to the duties of the Department of Military and Veterans'
3 Affairs and establishing educational assistant positions in the Department of Military
4 and Veterans' Affairs for the purpose of facilitating enrollment and retention of active
5 duty military and their dependents and veterans in education benefits and in the
6 University of Alaska."

7 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

8 * **Section 1.** AS 14.40 is amended by adding a new section to read:

9 **Sec. 14.40.053. Establishment of the office of military and veteran student**
10 **assistance.** (a) The University of Alaska shall establish an office of military and
11 veteran student assistance at the Anchorage and Fairbanks campus locations for the
12 purpose of providing statewide outreach and coordination of military and veteran
13 student educational assistance.

1 (b) The persons employed under AS 44.35.025 shall provide educational
2 assistance at the office established under (a) of this section to incoming, enrolled, and
3 graduating military and veteran students. In this subsection, "military and veteran
4 students" has the meaning given in AS 44.35.025.

5 (c) The University of Alaska may provide support in the form of equipment,
6 publications, and staffing to assist the coordinators in carrying out the duties
7 established under AS 44.35.025.

8 * **Sec. 2.** AS 44.35.020(a) is amended to read:

9 (a) The Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs shall

10 (1) conduct the military affairs of the state as prescribed by the
11 Military Code;

12 (2) cooperate with the federal government in matters of mutual
13 concern pertaining to the welfare of Alaska [ALASKAN] veterans, including
14 establishing, extending, or strengthening services for veterans in the state; [AND]

15 (3) annually, not later than February 1, make available a report to the
16 legislature, through the governor, outlining the department's activities during the
17 previous calendar year; the department shall notify the legislature that the report is
18 available; **and**

19 **(4) cooperate with the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary**
20 **Education and the University of Alaska to provide educational assistance to**
21 **Alaska veterans and active duty military dependents as provided in AS 44.35.025.**

22 * **Sec. 3.** AS 44.35 is amended by adding a new section to read:

23 **Sec. 44.35.025. Educational assistance; personnel.** (a) The Department of
24 Military and Veterans' Affairs shall employ not fewer than two full-time equivalent
25 persons to provide year-round educational assistance at the office of military and
26 veteran student assistance of the University of Alaska established under AS 14.40.053.

27 (b) The persons employed under this section shall

28 (1) advise the University of Alaska and the Alaska Commission on
29 Postsecondary Education on issues unique to military and veteran students;

30 (2) provide, before and after separation from military service,
31 educational assistance to military and veteran students that includes

- 1 (A) facilitating the process for
2 (i) verification and enrollment in optional federal and
3 state education benefits packages available to veterans and dependents
4 of active duty military personnel;
5 (ii) registration and enrollment in the University of
6 Alaska;
7 (iii) financial aid applications, benefits, and renewals;
8 (B) monitoring progress toward graduation or attainment of a
9 graduate degree;
10 (C) providing necessary referrals for academic counseling and
11 health care;
12 (D) making recommendations to teaching staff that will assist
13 in understanding and accommodating mental and physical health needs unique
14 to the military experience;
15 (3) provide public and student outreach and education on topics related
16 to military and veteran students.
17 (c) In this section, "military and veteran student" means a person who is a
18 resident of the state and who is a member of the armed forces of the United States or
19 the State of Alaska on active duty, a dependent of a member of the armed forces of the
20 United States or the State of Alaska on active duty, or a veteran of the armed forces of
21 the United States or the State of Alaska.