



Military & Veterans Affairs

During the 2019 legislative session, the General Assembly considered measures related to veterans and the military concerning education, employment, income taxes, license plates, vehicle registration, and public safety.

Education

Senate Bill 19-194 adds Colorado State University – Global Campus to the list of designated institutions of higher education that may participate in the Colorado National Guard Tuition Assistance Program.

The Dependent Tuition Assistance Program (DTAP) provides state tuition assistance to eligible dependents of prisoners of war, military personnel missing in action, or Colorado National Guardsmen, law enforcement officers, or firefighters who have died or were permanently disabled while on duty. *Senate Bill 19-174* repeals the provision prohibiting qualified dependents from receiving both a DTAP award and federal educational benefits. The bill also allows qualified dependents to receive a DTAP award prior to receiving federal educational benefits through the federal Public Safety Officers' Benefits Act, and specifies that the DTAP award must be reduced by the amount of any federal educational benefits received.

Employment

Senate Bill 19-056 would have allowed private employers to give preference to military

veterans and National Guard members in hiring, promoting, or retaining a veteran or National Guard member over another equally qualified applicant or employee as long as certain conditions were met. A private employer who was providing such a preference would need to post an adopted written policy at the place of employment, on any website maintained by the private employer, and on the employer's job application forms. The bill was postponed indefinitely by the Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee.

Income Taxes

Under a bill passed in 2015, a person on active duty in the military who reacquires Colorado residency can receive a deduction from his or her state taxable income. The person's military home of record must be Colorado, and his or her state of residency must have been changed back to Colorado after January 1, 2016, in order to be eligible for the deduction. *Senate Bill 19-029* codifies the Department of Revenue's current practice of evaluating these claims.

License Plates and Vehicle Registration

Senate Bill 19-205 creates the U.S. Woman Veteran license plate. The license plate is available to women who are honorably discharged or retired members of the U.S. Armed Forces who submit the required forms and fees.

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Senate Bill 19-054 separates the definition for historical and surplus military vehicles. It defines a historical military vehicle as a vehicle that is valued for historical purposes that was manufactured for use by the U.S. Armed Forces and is maintained in a condition that represents its military design and markings. The bill defines surplus military vehicle as a vehicle purchased for nonmilitary use that was built by the U.S. Armed Forces. The bill includes surplus military vehicles in the definition of off-highway vehicles for the purposes of titling these vehicles.

Public Safety

House Bill 19-1126 would have created a green alert program to notify the public when a veteran or military service member was missing and was known to have a physical or mental health condition related to his or her military service, or whose disappearance posed a credible threat to the safety and health of the person. The alert system would have been a coordinated effort between the Colorado Bureau of Investigation, local law enforcement agencies, and the state's public and commercial television and radio broadcasters. The bill was postponed indefinitely by the House State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee, at the request of the bill sponsor.