

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE BILL ANALYSIS

AMENDMENT DATE: 07/05/2012
POSITION: Oppose

BILL NUMBER: AB 2534
AUTHOR: Block, Marty

BILL SUMMARY: California community Colleges: Veterans Education Pilot Program

This bill would require the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (Chancellor's Office) to establish a voluntary pilot program for up to five California community colleges (CCC) to identify, explore, and develop best practices for a statewide policy on awarding credit for experiential learning for veterans seeking career technical education course credit, certificates, and associate degrees. The bill would require the participating CCC to report program and student-outcome data to the Chancellor's Office, who would be required to forward the data to the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) by July 1, 2017. The bill also would require the LAO to report on the pilot to the Legislature by December 1, 2017, including recommendations on extending, expanding, or modifying the pilot program.

FISCAL SUMMARY

The Chancellor's Office indicates that the bill would cost \$100,000 and require one position to develop, implement, and administer the pilot program. The bill would create a General Fund cost pressure to provide the necessary resources to implement the bill.

The bill could create a local cost pressure in the hundreds of thousands of dollars for participating CCCs to implement the pilot program.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

The current bill reflects a gut and amend since our analysis of the March 29, 2012 version, which would have extended the sunset date for the California Private Postsecondary Education Act from January 1, 2015 to January 1, 2016.

COMMENTS

The Department of Finance opposes this bill for the following reasons:

- The bill would cost \$100,000 and require one position for the Chancellor's Office to develop, implement, and administer the pilot program. The state does not have available General Fund resources to support this effort.
- This bill is unnecessary because nothing prohibits the Chancellor's Office from pursuing the goals of bill. Given the limited resources available, the Chancellor's Office should be allowed the flexibility to pursue this effort as local demand dictates and as existing resources allow. Furthermore, many CCCs are already working to provide veterans with course credit based on their military experience. To the extent that this is a local need and priority, the CCCs can address it accordingly within their limited resources.

The military issues academic transcripts that are endorsed and periodically evaluated by the American Council on Education (ACE) for service personnel and veterans. The ACE Guide to the evaluation of

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Governor's Office:	By:	Date:	Position Approved _____ Position Disapproved _____
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COMMENTS (continued)

educational experiences in the armed services has been one of the leading standard references for recognizing learning acquired in the military. Several CCCs participate in the Service members Opportunity Colleges (SOC) Consortium that has worked with the ACE to avoid excessive loss of previously earned credit and coursework duplication.

Currently, 50 CCCs are members of SOC and already perform assessments for military personnel and veterans. Several CCCs provide the services utilizing the ACE guidelines but do not participate in the SOC; the exact number of colleges is unknown. Additionally, the CCC Academic Senate recently passed a resolution urging local senates to apply course credit based on educational experiences achieved during military service.

Current law authorizes CCCs to provide matriculation services to all students including, but not limited to, assessment and placement testing; fees are not charged for these services. For any student seeking to receive credit for experience or previous training, an exam for credit process is available. Exams for credit are administered by each CCC to the extent each instructional area of the college grants this option. The CCCs that do not have experience with the ACE guidelines may use this process or utilize another CCC as a resource to perform the evaluation.

The Seymour-Campbell Matriculation Act of 1986 established matriculation services and required any CCC or district receiving funding for this purpose to provide matriculation services as specified. The Budget Act of 2009 identified the Matriculation program as being subject to the categorical flexibility, which allows districts to shift funding to other needs and priorities if specified conditions are met. The Budget Act of 2012 provides \$49 million for this program and maintains the categorical flexibility.

According to the author's office, student veterans have expressed a need for more transition assistance, improving outreach and campus-based programs, and easing the matriculation of prior military learning. This bill would establish a pilot program that would find ways to leverage prior military service into the career technical education field of study.

Code/Department Agency or Revenue Type	SO	(Fiscal Impact by Fiscal Year)					Fund Code
	LA	(Dollars in Thousands)					
	CO	PROP					
	RV	98	FC	2012-2013 FC	2013-2014 FC	2014-2015	
6870/Comm College	SO	No	C	100 C	100 C	100	0001
6870/Comm College	LA	Yes		----- See Fiscal Summary -----			0001