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Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Signs Legislation Requiring Public Universities and Colleges to Readmit Students Who Withdrew Due to Military Service

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Readmission to Be Granted Upon Written Request by the Returning Student, With No Associated Fees

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today signed legislation requiring New Jersey’s public universities and colleges to readmit students whose enrollment was interrupted due to military service. This includes service in the Armed Forces or as a member of the National Guard or Reserve – whether on active duty, active duty for training, or full-time National Guard duty under federal or State authority.

Under the bill, the institution of higher education is required to readmit the student with the same academic status the student had before withdrawing. Readmission is to be granted upon written request by the student with no associated fees.

“We are committed to doing everything we can in New Jersey to support our service members and veterans, including ensuring that the brave men and women who selflessly put their studies on hold to answer the call to serve can pick up their college education exactly where they left off,” **said Governor Murphy**. “With today’s bill signing, we are underscoring our support for New Jersey’s active-duty service members and veterans by removing barriers to securing a college education.”

“New Jersey is committed to helping every student complete their degree, including those who have paused their education to serve our country,” **said Secretary of Higher Education Brian Bridges**. “With this law, it will be easier for service members to return to college with the same academic standing they had before their military service and without the financial burden of application fees. I want to thank the sponsors for their leadership in championing this important legislation. Together, we reaffirm New Jersey’s commitment to fostering inclusive higher education opportunities, ensuring that all residents have clear paths to finishing their education and advancing their careers.”

“Calls to service from our state and country can happen at any moment, no matter what is going on in the lives of our service members. When they answer those calls, disruption to their pursuit of academic degrees is one of the sacrifices they frequently make,” **said Brig. Gen. Yvonne Mays, DMAVA Commissioner and The Adjutant General of New Jersey**. “This legislation ensures that those who answered the call to serve are afforded the opportunity to succeed and advance their educational careers when they return from duty.”

Sponsors of the legislation ([S1445/A3803 \(https://pub.njleg.state.nj.us/Bills/2024/S1500/1445_T1.PDF\)](https://pub.njleg.state.nj.us/Bills/2024/S1500/1445_T1.PDF)) include Senator Troy Singleton, Senator Kristin Corrado, Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson, Assemblywoman Cleopatra Tucker, and then Assemblyman, now U.S. Representative Herb Conaway.

"Colleges and universities should not be penalizing students who have their education interrupted to serve our country by forcing them to retake classes and spend more," **said Senator Troy Singleton**. "We should do everything we can to support veterans when they return, and I thank the Governor for signing this legislation to ensure that these students are able to pick up right where they left off without penalties."

"Every veteran in the state deserves the opportunity to pursue their higher education goals," **said Senator Kristin Corrado**. "With the Governor's signature, we will make certain that public colleges and universities have policies in place to provide special accommodations for veterans, and help our brave men and women in uniform transition back into civilian life more easily than ever before."

"We owe it to our service members to ensure they have a seamless transition back to college," **said Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson**. "Through A3803, we not only honor their commitment to this country but also make higher education more accessible."

"Service members sacrifice so much for our country, and it is only right we make it as easy as possible for them to pursue their educational aspirations upon their return," **said Assemblywoman Cleopatra Tucker**. "This bill is a small token of our appreciation for their service."

"I am pleased to learn that Governor Murphy has formally signed S1445/A3803 into law—the new NJ bill designed to enhance support and benefits for the veterans who call New Jersey home. This measure represents a vital step toward ensuring that every veteran receives the care, recognition, and educational opportunities they deserve," **said Luddie H. Austin, Commander, Dept. of NJ VFW**. "On behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, I extend my sincere appreciation to Governor Murphy for his steadfast commitment to our community and our heroes."

"The bill (S1445/A3803) that the Governor has signed is another helpful tool to support our veterans to continue the education needed to support their families and to give them a larger sense of being a viable part of our ever-changing society," **said Charles Andy Jackson, Dept. Commander NJ, American Legion**. "We, the American Legion members, are grateful for his continued support of furthering the educational needs of our Veterans. We know he will continue to support our Veterans by passing all bills presented in a proper way."

"The Disabled American Veterans, Department of New Jersey wholeheartedly supports the signing of this bill. A student that has their pursuit of a higher education degree interrupted by military service, whether by service in the Armed Forces, Reserves or National Guard, on active duty or for training, should not be penalized," **said George R. Schnepf, Jr., Adjutant, DAV Dept. of NJ**. "It is only fitting that the student be readmitted at the same academic status the student held when they last attended the institution. Education opportunities should be encouraged by military service. This bill will be helpful in those transitioning back to civilian life after service."

"The NJVN is excited about S1445/A3803 being signed by the Governor," **said Michael D. Boll, President, New Jersey Veteran Network**. "This bill is a great step forward in supporting our veteran college students during their studies by removing stressors and potential disruptions. Also, this will allow veterans to focus on their education and future."

The New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities (NJASCU) commends the Legislature and Governor for enacting this legislation, a critical measure that ensures our dedicated service members can seamlessly continue their higher education upon returning from military duty," **said Jennifer Keyes-Maloney, Executive Director, New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities (NJASCU)**. "We are proud that several of our member institutions have been recognized with the 2024-2025 Military Friendly® School (<https://www.militaryfriendly.com/schools/>) designation, reflecting their dedication to creating welcoming, supportive environments for military-affiliated students. As institutions committed to access and student success, our colleges and universities stand ready to support returning service members with the resources needed to achieve their academic and professional goals."

Governor Phil Murphy

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