

## Department of Planning and Budget 2019 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. **Bill Number:** HB2455

**House of Origin**     Introduced     Substitute     Engrossed  
**Second House**     In Committee     Substitute     Enrolled

2. **Patron:** Simon

3. **Committee:** House Committee on Education.

4. **Title:** Eligibility for Virginia National Guard Education Grants and Permissible Uses.

5. **Summary:** Increases from two to three the minimum number of years of remaining obligation that members of the Virginia National Guard are required to have to be eligible for the Virginia National Guard education grant. The bill also provides that the grant may be used for vocational and non-degree credit courses and programs. The cost of fees and textbooks are included in the calculation of the amount of such grants.

6. **Budget Amendment Necessary:** No

7. **Fiscal Impact Estimates:** Preliminary (see Item 8 below).

8. **Fiscal Implications:** Currently law authorizes the Department of Military Affairs (DMA) to reimburse members of the National Guard for the full cost of tuition for any courses in any public institution of higher education or accredited nonprofit private institution of higher education in which the member is enrolled, and any other assistance for which the member is eligible as a member of the Guard.

According to the DMA, this bill may increase demand for existing dedicated funding for tuition assistance for members of the Virginia National Guard since it expands upon existing educational expense criteria eligible for reimbursement. However, it is not possible to estimate the number of applicants nor the amount of tuition assistance that will be sought from the program, should this proposal become law. The Governor's introduced budget (HB1700/SB1100) includes an additional \$1.5 million in funding for FY 2020 for tuition assistance to help with recruitment and retention of guard members.

9. **Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected:** Department of Military Affairs.

10. **Technical Amendment Necessary:** No

11. **Other Comments:** This bill is identical to SB1412.

The New Economy Workforce Credential Grant Program (Program) is a tuition assistance initiative available to students, which may include guard members, who successfully complete a non-degree workforce credential program in certain designated high demand

fields offered at a community college. The Program reimburses up to two-thirds of the cost of such a program. The current budget, Chapter 2 Acts of the Assembly, Special Session I, appropriates \$9.5 million for this program and the Governor's introduced budget (HB1700/SB1100) increases this amount to \$13.5 million, and places income limits on access to the funds.