



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

900 EAST MAIN STREET
RICHMOND, VA 23219

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Veterans of Foreign Wars
Vietnam Veterans of America
Virginia Army/Air National
Guard Enlisted
Association
Virginia National Guard
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Women Marines Association*

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JLC Contact
Adam Provost
(845) 220-7410
adam.c.provost@
gmail.com

Position Paper 2016-05

In-state Tuition Eligibility for members of the Reserve Components

1. **OBJECTIVE:** Provide in-state tuition eligibility at a public colleges and universities for all members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces.
2. **BACKGROUND:**
 - a. Members of the Virginia National Guard and Armed Forces Reserve stationed in the Commonwealth of Virginia, who domicile in another state but reside in Virginia, are not currently eligible for in-state tuition if they have not resided in Virginia for at least one-year.
 - b. Individuals enlisting in the Virginia National Guard or Reserves generally make a six-year commitment to train, drill, and have their duty location in Virginia.
3. **DISCUSSION:**
 - a. The six-year commitment to protect the Commonwealth, along with residence (physical presence) within the Commonwealth, justifies immediate eligibility for in-state tuition rates for the guardsman or reservist.
 - b. The Commonwealth provides in-state tuition to active duty soldiers, and activated (full-time) reservists and guardsmen who are on long term orders, who reside in Virginia. In addition, veterans and dependents of active duty soldiers on orders are granted in-state tuition rates.
 - c. The requested legislation expands this benefit to all members of the Virginia National Guard and Reserve components who reside in Virginia.
 - d. It is only equitable that the Commonwealth supports its Guard and Reserve members to at least the same degree as it supports active duty service members and families stationed in the Commonwealth.
 - e. Virginia National Guardsmen directly support the Commonwealth through state missions. They respond to the call of the Governor unless deployed in support of a federal mission.
 - f. Drill weekends and annual training periods often focus on preparing for threats and needs of the Commonwealth. The proposed legislatives initiative is the proper thing to do for the Commonwealth's citizen-soldiers.
 - g. The Virginia National Guard is "the Guardian of the Commonwealth" and the military force of the Governor of Virginia. It is reasonable that in-state tuition rates be provided to these soldiers and airmen who support missions in the Commonwealth.
4. **RECOMMENDATIONS:** That the Governor and the General Assembly change the eligibility for in-state tuition to include all members of the Virginia National Guard and the Reserve components, thus recognizing their service to the Commonwealth and treating them equality to the active components and veterans.