



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

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*Air Force Association
Air Force Sergeants
Association
American Legion
AMVETS
Association of the United
States Army
Disabled American
Veterans
Fifth Baptist Church Veterans
Ministry
Fleet Reserve Association
Legion of Valor of the
U.S., Inc.
Marine Corps League
Military Officers Association
of America
Military Order of the
Purple Heart
Military Order of the
World Wars
Navy Mutual Aid Association
Paralyzed Veterans of
America
Reserve Organization of
America
Roanoke Valley Veterans
Council
Student Veterans of America
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Vietnam Veterans of America
Virginia Army/Air National
Guard Enlisted
Association
Virginia National Guard
Association
Women Marines Association
Wounded Warrior Project*

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2023

Position Paper

Virginia National Guard Tuition Assistance Waiver

OBJECTIVE: To ensure Virginia's continued investment and commitment to the men and women of the Virginia National Guard by offering a tuition voucher for state schools in Virginia.

BACKGROUND:

1. The Virginia National State Tuition Assistance Program (STAP) is a long-standing benefit for the National Guard members which provided tuition, up to a certain amount, for eligible National Guard members.
2. In 2021 the STAP program changed to a reimbursement model causing confusion and frustration as substantial costs were shifted to service members that now required them to pay up front and request reimbursement at the conclusion of the semester.
3. In 2021 the law change eliminated the Virginia National Guard's ability to enter into agreement with schools to offer in-state tuition for those service members who live outside Virginia but belong to the Virginia National Guard. This was the first time that Virginia Guard members who live out of state were subjected, by default, to out of state tuition rates. In 2022 the legislature adjusted the requirement to require two years of out of state tuition payments before they could qualify for in-state tuition.

DISCUSSION:

1. The Virginia National Guard performs a critical and essential role in both service to the Commonwealth and to the Nation.
2. Virginia competes with surrounding states to attract talent to their National Guard.
3. The competitive landscape extends to civilian employers many of which offer substantial education assistance.
4. The Virginia National Guard is a tremendous net-positive contributor to the Commonwealth in terms of resources. The Guard receives a 26x multiplier in federal dollars to every state dollar allocated to the organization.

RECOMMENDATION: Provide a tuition waiver system for all eligible Virginia National Guard service members to attend a state school in the Commonwealth.

