

By Senator Cruz

18-01296-22

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1                   A bill to be entitled  
2       An act relating to the Educational Dollars for Duty  
3       program; amending s. 250.10, F.S.; revising  
4       eligibility for the Educational Dollars for Duty  
5       program (EDD) to include members of the Florida  
6       National Guard who enroll in an accredited or licensed  
7       online degree program provided by a public or  
8       nonpublic postsecondary institution or technical  
9       center in this state or another state; conforming  
10      requirements for online courses included in the EDD;  
11      conforming requirements for adoption of tuition  
12      payment guidelines by the Adjutant General; providing  
13      an effective date.

14  
15 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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17       Section 1. Subsection (7) of section 250.10, Florida  
18       Statutes, is amended to read:

19       250.10 Appointment and duties of the Adjutant General.—

20       (7) The Adjutant General shall develop an education  
21       assistance program for members in good standing of the Florida  
22       National Guard who enroll in an authorized course of study at a  
23       public or nonpublic postsecondary institution or technical  
24       center in this the state, or who enroll in an authorized course  
25       of study through an online degree program provided by a public  
26       or nonpublic postsecondary institution or technical center in  
27       this state or another state, which postsecondary institution or  
28       technical center has been accredited by an accrediting body  
29       recognized by the United States Department of Education or

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30 licensed by the Commission for Independent Education. Education  
31 assistance also may be used for training to obtain industry  
32 certifications approved by the Department of Education pursuant  
33 to s. 1008.44 and continuing education to maintain license  
34 certifications. The education assistance program shall be known  
35 as the Educational Dollars for Duty program (EDD).

36 (a) The program shall establish application requirements,  
37 including, but not limited to, requirements that the applicant:

38 1. Be 17 years of age or older.

39 2. Be presently domiciled in the state.

40 3. Be an active drilling member and in good standing in the  
41 Florida National Guard at the beginning of and throughout the  
42 entire academic term for which benefits are received.

43 4. Maintain continuous satisfactory participation in the  
44 Florida National Guard for the school term for which benefits  
45 are received.

46 5. Upon enrollment in the program, complete a memorandum of  
47 agreement to:

48 a. Comply with the rules of the program.

49 b. Serve in the Florida National Guard for the period  
50 specified in the member's enlistment or reenlistment contract.

51 c. Authorize the release of information pursuant to  
52 subparagraph (d)6. by the postsecondary institution or technical  
53 center to the education service office of the Department of  
54 Military Affairs, subject to applicable federal and state law.

55 (b) The program shall define those members of the Florida  
56 National Guard who are ineligible to participate in the program  
57 and those courses of study which are not authorized for the  
58 program.

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59           1. Ineligible members include, but are not limited to, a  
60 member, commissioned officer, warrant officer, or enlisted  
61 person who has obtained a master's degree using the program.

62           2. Inactive members of the Florida National Guard and  
63 members of the Individual Ready Reserve are not eligible to  
64 participate in the program.

65           3. Courses not authorized include noncredit courses,  
66 courses that do not meet degree requirements, courses that do  
67 not meet requirements for completion of career training, or  
68 other courses as determined by program definitions.

69           4. The program may not pay repeat course fees.

70           (c) The program may include, but is not limited to:

71           1. Courses at a public or nonpublic postsecondary  
72 institution or technical center in this the state, or online  
73 degree program courses provided by a public or nonpublic  
74 postsecondary institution or technical center in this state or  
75 another state, which postsecondary institution or technical  
76 center is accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the  
77 United States Department of Education or licensed by the  
78 Commission for Independent Education.

79           2. Training to obtain industry certifications, limited to  
80 certifications approved by the Department of Education under s.  
81 1008.44.

82           3. Continuing education to maintain a license or  
83 certification. Notwithstanding subparagraph (b)1., members who  
84 have obtained a master's degree using the program are eligible  
85 for funding under this subparagraph.

86           4. Licensing and industry certification examination fees.  
87 Notwithstanding subparagraph (b)1., members who have obtained a

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88 master's degree using the program are eligible for funding under  
89 this subparagraph.

90 5. Notwithstanding subparagraph (b)3., developmental  
91 educational courses.

92 (d) The Adjutant General shall adopt rules for the overall  
93 policy, guidance, administration, implementation, and proper use  
94 of the program. Such rules must include, but need not be limited  
95 to:

96 1. Guidelines for certification by the Adjutant General of  
97 a guard member's eligibility.

98 2. Procedures for notification to a postsecondary  
99 institution or technical center of a guard member's termination  
100 of eligibility.

101 3. Guidelines for approving courses of study that are  
102 authorized for the program, including online courses, industry  
103 certification training, and continuing education to maintain  
104 license certifications.

105 4. Guidelines for approving the use of program funds for  
106 licensing and industry certification examination fees.

107 5. Procedures for restitution when a guard member fails to  
108 comply with the penalties described in this section.

109 6. Procedures that require a public or nonpublic  
110 postsecondary institution or technical center that receives  
111 funding from the program to provide information regarding course  
112 enrollment, course withdrawal, course cancellation, course  
113 completion, course failure, and grade verification of enrolled  
114 members to the education service office of the Department of  
115 Military Affairs.

116 7. Guidelines for the payment of tuition and fees, not to

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117 exceed the highest in-state tuition rate charged by a public  
118 postsecondary institution in this ~~the~~ state or, in the case of  
119 an online degree program, the highest tuition rate charged by a  
120 program provided by a public postsecondary institution in this  
121 state or another state.

122 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2022.