

Veteran Issues passed by 2015 General Assembly

SEA 280 - Military designation on driver's licenses and ID cards.

Signed by Governor April 29

Provides that an individual may request an indication of the individual's veteran status or active military or naval service status on the individual's driver's license or state identification card. (Current law provides only for an indication of veteran status.)

SEA 298 - Voluntary veterans' preference employment policy.

Signed by Governor May 5

Provides for a voluntary veterans' preference policy for hiring, promoting, or retaining a veteran in private employment.

SEA 434 - Financial aid and tuition.

Signed by Governor April 15

Provides that a person who: (1) is a nonresident; (2) is a member of the Indiana National Guard; and (3) attends a state educational institution; is eligible to pay the resident tuition rate for undergraduate and graduate courses. Provides that certain: (1) veterans; and (2) persons who serve on active military duty; are eligible to pay the resident tuition rate for graduate courses. Provides that the commission for higher education: (1) may consider only the residency status of a student; and (2) may not consider the residency status of the student's parents or legal guardian even if the student is considered a dependent for purposes of federal or state financial aid; for purposes of eligibility for the National Guard tuition supplement program and the National Guard scholarship extension program. Amends the definition of "eligible student" for purposes of the employment aid readiness network (EARN) Indiana program.

Senate Bill 441 - Various tax matters.

Signed by Governor May 6

Eliminates the World War I veteran property tax deduction for property taxes imposed for an assessment date after 2015. Increases the maximum amount of the state income tax deduction for federal civil service annuity income to \$8,000 for 2015 and \$16,000 for 2016 and thereafter. Provides that the deduction is also available to a surviving spouse.

Issues covered by Budget funding – Veterans Problem-Solving Courts were funded at \$500K in 2015 and 2016 for the establishment, training, and certification of these courts, if requested. Courts may consider as mitigating circumstances PTSD and TBI during sentencing and probation. The funding of IDVA includes \$ to establish a women’s veteran service officer.

HEA 1131 - Exemption of military reservists from jury duty.

Signed by Governor April 15

Provides that an individual who serves on reserve duty in the armed forces of the United States or the Indiana National Guard while on military orders is exempt from jury duty.

HEA 1333 - Higher education financial assistance.

(Add-on to SEA 434)

Signed by Governor May 7

Removes Indiana residency requirements for scholarships under the National Guard tuition supplement program and the National Guard scholarship extension program. Requires applicants for the National Guard tuition supplement program and the National Guard scholarship extension program to have used any available state or federal assistance, if applicable. Establishes cumulative grade point average requirements for the renewal of scholarships under the National Guard tuition supplement program. Provides that an applicant is eligible for a first year higher education award if the applicant is ineligible for a National Guard tuition supplement grant or a scholarship under the National Guard scholarship extension program. Amends the cumulative grade point average requirements for certain tuition and fee exemptions for children of veterans. Amends the definition of "eligible student" for purposes of the employment aid readiness network (EARN) Indiana program

HEA 1456 - Servicemembers civil relief act.

Signed by Governor May 4

Creates the servicemembers civil relief act. Provides that protections under Indiana's civil relief act supplement protections for servicemembers under the federal servicemembers civil relief act.