

Date of Hearing: August 5, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 1188 (Archuleta) – As Amended April 9, 2026

Policy Committee:	Education	Vote:	8 - 0
	Military and Veterans Affairs		8 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: No Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill expands existing authority for establishment of courses in military science and tactics with reference to Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) to include charter schools and county offices of education (COEs) and allows participation by homeschooled pupils. The bill also requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to make JROTC program information regarding eligibility and application requirements available on its website.

FISCAL EFFECT:

No new state costs. While the bill does expand eligibility under state law both to entities that may offer a JROTC program and to students who may attend, expansion of the program, which already allows participation of homeschooled students in public school-operated JROTC programs, depends on availability of federal funds.

COMMENTS:

1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

Many military families opt to homeschool their children; nearly twice the rate of civilian families. They face unique challenges associated with military life which create instability and at times effect families' abilities to adapt to new surroundings and routines. State policies that streamline access to educational resources such as extracurricular activities and sports better support students and their families. Prioritizing clarifying participation requirements for Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps, JROTC, can contribute to greater stability for military families, which supports retention efforts. Allowing homeschooled students to participate in JROTC programs maintains military cultural connections and leadership development opportunities. California can facilitate access by clarifying in state policy that pursuant to federal law, homeschool children are required access to JROTC programs. SB 1188 ensures local education agencies provide clear and accessible guidance to schools and information for parents. This bill supports military family values while providing structured programs that complement homeschool education.

- 2) **Background.** The JROTC is a voluntary high school instruction option available to students and administered by the Department of Defense. JROTC includes academic coursework in leadership and ethics, civics, history, health and wellness, and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) over a three- or four-year period. Participation in JROTC does not compel a student to enlist in military service after graduation but may confer some benefits at the time of entry into service for those who do enlist.

Under current law, the governing board of a school district maintaining a high school may establish courses in military science and tactics, in accordance with federal law, but may not require students to take such courses. However, such authority in state law was established decades ago before the proliferation of charter schools or independent study along with other changes to state and federal law. This bill expands the authority provided to school districts to charter schools and home school or independent study programs, which aligns to federal provisions for the program.

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