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# SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

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**Bill No:** SB 892 **Hearing Date:** March 18, 2026  
**Author:** Grove  
**Version:** February 23, 2026  
**Urgency:** No **Fiscal:** Yes  
**Consultant:** Olgalilia Ramirez

**Subject:** Public postsecondary education: priority registration: members and former members of the Armed Forces of the United States and State Guard.

**NOTE:** This bill has been referred to the Committees on Education and *Military and Veterans Affairs*. A “do pass” motion should include referral to the Committee on *Military and Veterans Affairs*.

## SUMMARY

This bill removes, commencing July 1, 2027, limitations on the duration and timing for which the California State University (CSU) and community college districts (CCD) are required, and the University of California (UC) is requested, to grant priority registration for enrollment to a current and former member of the United States (US) Armed Forces.

## BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the California Community Colleges (CCC), the CSU, and the UC as the 3 segments of public institutions of higher education in the state. (Education Code (EC) § 66010)
- 2) Requires the CSU and each CCD, and requests the UC, to grant priority registration for enrollment to a member or former member of the US Armed Forces who is a resident of California and who has received an honorable discharge, a general discharge, or an other than honorable discharge, and to any member or former member of the State Guard, as specified, for any academic term attended at one of these institutions for 4 academic years after leaving state or federal active duty for use within 15 years of leaving state or federal active duty. (EC § 66025.8)
- 3) Authorizes the CSU and each CCD, and requests the UC to offer priority registration to foster youth, former foster youth, homeless youth, or formerly homeless youth, as defined. (EC § 66025.9)
- 4) Requires each CCD to offer priority registration to students eligible for disabled student programs and services, students eligible for extended opportunity programs and services, students receiving CalWORKS, and students who receive Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) as defined. (EC § 66025.91 and 66025.92)

- 5) Requires each campus of the CSU, and each campus within a CCD, and requests each campus of the UC to offer priority registration to student parents. (EC § 66025.81)
- 6) Requires CCDs and the CSU and requests the UC to grant priority registration to students employed as first responders. (EC § 66025.82)
- 7) Provides, under federal law, that veterans and certain dependents are eligible for education benefits under the Post-9/11 GI Bill. The Harry W. Colmery Veterans Education Assistance Act of 2017 (Forever GI Bill) eliminated the 15-year time limitation for veterans discharged from active duty on or after January 1, 2013 allowing eligible individuals to use Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits without a time limit. (Public Law 115-48, 38 U.S.C § 3321, et seq.)

## ANALYSIS

This bill removes, commencing July 1, 2027, limitations on the duration and timing for which the CSU and CCDs are required, and the UC is requested to grant priority registration for enrollment of current and former members of the US Armed Forces. Specifically, it:

- 1) Strikes the provisions limiting priority registration to 4 academic years after leaving and for use within 15 years of leaving state or federal active duty.
- 2) Explicitly includes the California Naval Militia and the California State Guard in the definition of Armed Forces.
- 3) Sunsets and recasts provisions governing priority registration for current and former members of the Armed Forces, delaying the implementation of the bill's provisions to July 1, 2027.

## STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) **Need for the bill.** According to the author, "Veterans and State Guard members have earned every opportunity to succeed when they return to civilian life. Many do not have the ability to enroll in college immediately after their service because they are working, raising families, or addressing health needs. They should not lose access to priority registration simply because life required them to wait.

"SB 892 ensures that priority registration is available whenever a veteran is ready to pursue higher education. By aligning California policy with the Federal Forever GI Bill, this measure guarantees that those who served our country can access the classes they need on a timeline that works for them."

- 2) **Federal Forever GI Bill removed 15-year eligibility restriction.** The Forever GI Bill, among other things, removed the 15-year eligibility limitation for Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits for veterans discharged from active duty on or after 2013, allowing those veterans to use their education benefits at any time after separation from service. Prior to this change, veterans generally had 15 years from their last discharge from active duty to use these benefits. Existing state law

governing priority registration for service members attending California public higher education institutions appears to mirror the now-outdated 15-year eligibility window. State statute has not been updated to reflect the changes made to the GI Bill in 2017. This bill seeks to align state priority registration requirements with the federal removal of the 15-year eligibility window, thereby allowing eligible veterans to access priority registration regardless of when they leave state or federal active duty.

- 3) **Priority registration.** Priority registration decisions are made at the campus level at each segment. The process allows specific students access to classes ahead of the general student population. For example, continuing students generally are allowed to enroll in courses before new students enroll. As such, students who have priority registration status have an advantage over other students.

In addition to priority registration granted by the campuses, existing law requires the CSU and/or CCCs, and requests the UC to grant priority enrollment to the following students:

- a) CSU California Promise students (CSU).
- b) Current and former foster youth (CSU, CCCs and UC).
- c) Homeless youth (CSU, CCCs and UC).
- d) Any member or former member of the US Armed Forces, and who is a resident of California, who has received an honorable discharge, a general discharge, or an other than honorable discharge, and to any member or former member of the State Military Reserve, for any academic term attended at one of these institutions for four academic years after he or she has left state or federal active duty, which he or she shall use within 15 years of leaving state or federal active duty (CSU, CCCs, and UC).
- e) Any student who is a CalWORKs or Tribal TANF recipient (CCCs).
- f) Students in the Community College Extended Opportunity Programs and Services program, and disabled students who are determined to be eligible for disabled student programs and services (CCCs).

This bill explicitly adds former and current members of the California Naval Militia and the California State Guard to the definition of US Armed Forces for purposes of granting priority registration. The addition appears largely technical, as current law already provides priority registration to members of the State Guard, and the California Naval Militia is a component of the California State Guard.

- 4) **Eliminates the 4-year duration of priority registration eligibility.** In addition to removing the 15-year timeline for *when* veterans may receive priority registration, this bill eliminates the 4-year rule limiting how *long* veterans may use the benefit. Unlike the federal change made under the Forever GI Bill governing when veterans may use their educational benefits, the duration of the award remains

unchanged—eligible veterans may qualify for up to 4 years of the Post-9/11 GI Bill entitlement. Eliminating the 4-year eligibility restriction for priority registration would effectively extend the state benefit beyond the duration of a veteran's Post-9/11 GI Bill eligibility. As noted in comment 4) of this analysis, existing state law grants priority registration to several student groups, none of which are subject to time limitations. In that respect, the change proposed in this bill appears to align veterans' eligibility with those provisions.

**SUPPORT**

California State University, Bakersfield  
Bakersfield College  
California State University, Office of the Chancellor  
County of Fresno  
County of Kern  
Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce  
Kern County Board of Supervisors Phillip Peters  
Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office  
Kern County Supervisor Chris Parlier  
Kern County Supervisor Jeff Flores  
Kyle Pennington, Fresno County Veterans Service Officer

**OPPOSITION**

None received

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