



SENATE BILL 118: Military and Veteran Support Act.

2025-2026 General Assembly

Committee:	House State and Local Government. If favorable, re-refer to Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	Date:	June 10, 2025
Introduced by:	Sens. Lazzara, Sawyer, Daniel	Prepared by:	Karyl Smith
Analysis of:	PCS to Second Edition S118-CSCJf-13		Committee Co-Counsel

OVERVIEW: *The PCS to Senate Bill 118 would do the following:*

- *Reduce concealed handgun fees for certain veterans.*
- *Provide additional time for military families to provide proof of residency for public school enrollment.*
- *Prohibit discriminatory admissions policies regarding active duty service members and veterans, require military admissions deferment for certain persons admitted to constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina, and provide in-State tuition to certain honorably discharged veterans.*
- *Regulate compensation for services related to veterans' benefits matters.*
- *Authorize remote drivers license renewals for active duty military and their families.*
- *Authorize sheriffs to send a concealed handgun permit expiration notice via email.*

CURRENT LAW & BILL ANALYSIS:

Part I – Reduce Concealed Handgun Fees for Certain Veterans

G.S. 14-415.19 establishes the fees for a concealed handgun permit. Under G.S. 14-415.19(a), the application fee is \$80.00, the renewal fee is \$75.00, and the duplicate permit fee is \$15.00. The proceeds of these fees are remitted to the North Carolina Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the sheriff processing the concealed handgun permit application.

Under G.S. 14-415.19(a1), for a retired sworn law enforcement officer, the application fee for a concealed handgun permit is \$45.00, and the renewal fee is \$40.00. For the reduced fees to apply, the retired officer must provide a copy of the officer's letter of retirement and written documentation from the agency that previously employed the officer indicating that the officer was not involuntarily terminated or under investigation within six months of retirement. The proceeds of the reduced fees are remitted to DPS.

Part I of the PCS would reduce the concealed handgun permit application and renewal fees for individuals who were discharged honorably or under general honorable conditions from military service in the Armed Forces of the United States. An applicant claiming a reduced fee based on previous military service would need to provide one of the following:

- A Form DD-214 showing the applicant has been discharged honorably or under general honorable conditions.

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- A Veterans Identification Card issued by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Other documentation (i) showing the applicant was discharged honorably or under general honorable conditions and (ii) deemed satisfactory by the sheriff.

If the applicant provides this documentation, the application fee for a concealed handgun permit would be \$45.00, and the renewal fee would be \$40.00. The proceeds of these fees would be remitted to DPS.

This Part would become effective July 1, 2025, and would apply to applications for concealed handgun permits and permit renewals submitted on or after that date.

Part II – Provide Additional Time for Military Families to Provide Proof of Residency for Public School Enrollment

G.S. 115C-366(a9) allows military children to remotely register to enroll in a local school administrative unit (LEA) prior to residency in the LEA when certain conditions are met.

To qualify to remotely enroll prior to residency, the military child must have a parent or legal guardian (military parent) on active military duty who is transferred or pending transfer pursuant to an official military order to a military installation or reservation in the State. A copy of the official military order transferring the military parent must be provided to the LEA upon request. The military parent must complete and submit required enrollment forms and documentation, other than proof of residency and documentation related to disciplinary actions.

The military child may then remotely enroll in a school in the LEA, and may participate in school assignment, registering for courses, and applying for any other programs that require additional request or application. A military child who enrolled remotely cannot attend school in the LEA until proof of residency and documentation related to disciplinary actions are provided to the school.

Part II of the PCS would amend G.S. 115C-366(a9) to allow military children to begin attending school in an LEA without proof of residency if proof of residency has not yet become available because the military parent and military child are residing in temporary housing.

In this situation, the LEA must:

- Allow the military child to enroll and begin attending school in the LEA of anticipated domicile for a period of up to one year from (i) the military parent's reporting-for-duty date, separation date from active military duty, or anticipated separation date from active military duty, or (ii) through the end of the school year, before being considered a resident of another LEA.
- Allow a military child who is a high school junior or senior to enroll and begin attending school in the LEA of anticipated domicile through high school graduation.

This Part would become effective when it becomes law and would apply beginning with the 2025-2026 school year.

Part III – Prohibit Discriminatory Admissions Policies regarding Active Duty Service Members and Veterans, Require Military Admissions Deferment for Certain Persons, and Provide In-State Tuition to Certain Veterans

There are no Statewide statutes governing the evaluations of applications from individuals serving in the military or intending to serve in the military or enrollment deferments for military service.

G.S. 116-143.3A provides that veterans and dependents of veterans who are "covered individuals" under 38 USC 3679(c) are eligible for in-State tuition without having satisfied the 12 month residency requirement if the following are met: (i) the individual's abode is North Carolina; (ii) the individual

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provides the institution of higher education at which the individual intends to enroll a letter of intent to establish residence in North Carolina; and (iii) the individual meets the federal definition of "covered individuals" under 38 USC 3679(c).

Part III of the PCS would do the following:

- Mandate that constituent institutions of The University of North Carolina cannot deny admissions to any applicant solely on the basis of the applicant's indication that the applicant is serving in the uniformed service or that the applicant intends to serve in the uniformed service.
- Require the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina to adopt a policy requiring constituent institutions to provide for enrollment deferment for members of the uniformed service and spouses of members of the uniformed services if the deferment is requested at least 30 days prior to enrollment in a constituent institution. Members and spouses of members of the reserve Armed Forces must be granted deferments of at least 2 years after the entry into the reserve Armed Forces. All other members and spouses of members of the uniformed services must be granted deferments of at least 5 years after entry into the uniformed services.
- Provide in-State tuition for qualifying veterans who meet the following criteria:
 - Served active duty for not less than 90 days in the Armed Forces.
 - Received an Honorable Discharge.
 - Meets at least one of the following criteria:
 - Graduated from a North Carolina high school on or after January 1, 2004.
 - Served active duty in the Armed Forces with a permanent duty station in North Carolina for at least 90 continuous days.
 - Was awarded a Purple Heart.

This Part would become effective when it becomes law and would apply beginning with the 2025-2026 academic year.

Part IV – Regulate Compensation for Services Related to Veterans' Benefits Matters

Part IV of the PCS would do the following:

- Create new G.S. 143B-1278 in Article 14 (Department of Military and Veterans Affairs) of Chapter 143B to regulate compensation for services related to veterans' benefits matters.
- Define "compensation" and "veterans' benefits matter."
- Prohibit the following:
 - Receiving compensation for preparation, presentation or prosecution of, or advising, consulting, or assisting an individual with an initial disability claim related to a veterans' benefits matter.
 - Receiving compensation for referring an individual to another person to prepare, present, prosecute, or advise, consult, or assist with a veterans' benefits matter.
 - Guaranteeing or advertising that an individual is certain to receive specific veterans' benefits or that any individual is certain to receive a specific level, percentage, or amount of veterans' benefits.
 - A person seeking to receive compensation for advising, assisting, or consulting any individual with any veterans' benefits matter or engaging in the preparation of an initial claim for a fee must not:

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- Aggressively or directly solicit business regarding any veterans' benefit matter.
- Gain direct access to any personal medical, financial, or government benefits log in, username, or password information.
- A person seeking to receive compensation for advising, assisting, or consulting any individual with any veterans' benefits matter cannot utilize a medical professional for a secondary medical evaluation, if they have an employment relationship with that professional.
- Entering into an agreement related to a veterans' benefits matter that does not comply with the memorialization of terms provision.
- Require a written agreement that memorializes all the terms before rendering any services on a veterans' benefits matter. The written agreement must comply with the following:
 - Be signed by both of the parties and contain all the terms regarding the individual's payment of fees for services rendered including (i) fees for services are contingent upon a successful outcome and cannot exceed five times the one month increase in benefits, and (ii) no initial fee may be charged.
 - Contain a specific disclosure in at least 12-point font in a readily noticeable and identifiable place in the agreement. The disclosure must also be provided orally, be acknowledged verbally, and signed.
- Make a violation of this statute an unfair trade practice.
- Exclude attorneys licensed to practice in North Carolina from the requirements of this statute.

This Part would become effective October 1, 2025.

Part V – Authorize Remote Drivers License Renewals for Active Duty Military and Their Families

The North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles currently issues drivers licenses in accordance with statutory requirements set out in G.S. 20-7. The duration of licenses issued to persons aged 18-66 is generally eight years. G.S. 20-7(f)(6) provides that the Division of Motor Vehicles may offer remote renewal of drivers licenses to persons who meet eligibility requirements. One of the eligibility requirements for renewal is that the most recent renewal must have been in person and not remote. This complies with federal regulations, which provide that states must require holders of REAL ID drivers licenses to renew licenses in person no less frequently than every sixteen years.

Part V of the PCS would amend statutory eligibility requirements for remote renewal of drivers licenses to provide an exception from the requirement that the most recent prior renewal was in person for (i) an active duty member of the Armed Forces of the United States or a reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States, who is stationed outside of this State, and (ii) the member's spouse and dependent children. The exception would allow those licensees to renew a second consecutive time if:

- The license being renewed is not REAL ID compliant; or
- The license is REAL ID compliant but is being converted to a non-REAL ID compliant license for purposes of the renewal.

This exception would allow for consecutive renewals in a way that complies with federal regulations related to REAL ID.

This Part would become effective October 1, 2025, and would apply to licenses renewed on or after that date.

Part VI – Authorize Sheriffs to Send a Concealed Handgun Permit Expiration Notice via Email

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G.S. 14-415.16 provides that at least 45 days prior to the expiration of a concealed handgun permit, the sheriff of the county where the permit was issued must send written notice to the permit holder to inform them of the expiration of the permit and the requirements for renewal. The notice must be sent by first class mail to the last known address of the permit holder.

Part VI of the PCS would authorize a sheriff to send the required notice regarding the expiration of a permit holder's concealed handgun permit via electronic mail, rather than first class mail, if the permit holder consents to receive electronic communications. The permit holder may consent to receive electronic communications on the permit application. The State Bureau of Investigation would be required to create a separate paper form that a permit holder may submit to the sheriff to provide or revoke their consent to receive electronic communications.

This Part would become effective October 1, 2025.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Except as otherwise provided, the bill would become effective when it becomes law.

Michael Johnston, Nicholas Giddings, Kara McCraw, Drupti Chauhan, Wendy Ray, and Amy Darden, Staff Attorneys with the Legislative Analysis Division, substantially contributed to this summary.