



Canine Members of the Armed Forces Act Too Cute To Be Equipment – Too Brave To Go Down Without A Fight

27 February 2014

H.B. 5207, AN ACT CONCERNING COLLEGE CREDIT FOR MILITARY TRAINING.

Senator Cassano, Representative Willis, Senator Boucher, Representative LeGeyt and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, I'm Lisa Phillips. I was born and raised in East Hartford, Connecticut.

I would like to thank Representative Willis for having the committee draft this bill.

On 18 May 2001 I joined the United States Army and was trained to be a veterinary technician. I served in the Army taking care of our nation's military working dogs, customs dogs and board patrol dogs for almost five years at three military bases in the San Antonio, Texas area before being medically discharged for an injury that happened during my basic training.

Prior to being medically discharged I was told that if I wanted to continue working as a vet tech in civilian life that I should apply for work at Vet clinics that have prior military Veterinarians because they know our training and will hire us. I was told that civilian veterinary clinics that have never worked with former military, and therefore do not know the extensive training we receive, tend to not hire former military vet techs, unless the vet tech re-takes their training in college.

Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, TX trains all veterinarian technicians. This area has a large population of former military Veterinarians working as civilian Veterinarians who are very happy to hire former military vet techs, like myself. This was part of the reason I stayed in the San Antonio area and bought a home, instead of returning to Connecticut after I was medically discharged.

As the content of this bill has spread around the internet, there has been concern expressed about one particular word in line 2: "may." Please don't think that we don't appreciate this bill, we do. I don't know anyone who wants to re-take classes, which is what your bill will help us avoid. But we all know "may" has no teeth.

I would also like to acknowledge The American Council of Education's recommendation for college credit for military service by collaborating with the U.S. Department of Defense to review military training and experiences, and recommend appropriate college credit.

These are both positive steps forward. It would be great if members of our military knew that military training for specific jobs and skill sets will transfer to college credit that can be used in the civilian world for employment.

It's too late for my Mom to have her youngest child move back to Connecticut, but by passing this bill you'll help other Connecticut Blue Star Mothers and Fathers get their children back in the state and save us all a lot of frustration from having to re-take classes we could teach.

Thank you again for bringing this bill out, if you can make the "may" a "shall" it would be great.

Lisa Phillips
Originator of
Canine Members of the Armed Forces Act