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SB-228 Civilian youth opportunities program. (2023-2024)

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Senate Bill No. 228

CHAPTER 703

An act to amend Section 532 of the Military and Veterans Code, relating to military.

[Approved by Governor October 10, 2023. Filed with Secretary of State October 10, 2023.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 228, Roth. Civilian youth opportunities program.

Existing law authorizes the Adjutant General to conduct a civilian youth opportunities program, known as the "National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program," consisting of a residential program and post-residential mentoring to serve at-risk teens in areas of the state, including, but not limited to, the San Joaquin Valley and northern California, as specified.

This bill would require the Adjutant General to additionally conduct that program in western Riverside County.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 532 of the Military and Veterans Code is amended to read:

532. (a) (1) Subject to subdivision (b), the Adjutant General may enter into a cooperative agreement with the governing board of a school district or a county office of education for the purpose of establishing, pursuant to existing statutory authority in the Education Code, a military academy to be operated as a charter school, pursuant to Part 26.8 (commencing with Section 47600) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Education Code, or as one of the existing alternative education options, available under the Education Code. The program would provide a structured, disciplined environment that would be conducive to learning in a college preparatory environment. In addition to academic skills, students would develop leadership, self-esteem, and a strong sense of community. An academy established pursuant to this section shall comply with the Education Code.

(2) Pursuant to Section 509 of Title 32 of the United States Code and subject to subdivision (b), the Adjutant General shall conduct a civilian youth opportunities program, to be known as the "National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program," which shall consist of at least a 22-week residential program and a 12-month post-residential mentoring period. The program shall serve at-risk teens in areas of the state, including, but not limited to, the San Joaquin Valley, western Riverside County, and northern California, and shall be subject to all of the following:

(A) The program shall seek to improve life skills and employment potential of participants by providing military-based leadership development, promoting fellowship and community service, developing life-coping skills and job skills, improving physical fitness, providing health and hygiene training, and assisting participants to receive a high school diploma or its equivalent.

(B) (i) The Adjutant General may accept federal funding to implement a National Guard Youth Challenge Program. The Adjutant General may appoint a director and other service members and employees, permanent or temporary, to operate the program.

(ii) The Adjutant General may appoint a current member of the State Guard who possesses a bachelor's degree in psychology or social work to serve as a counselor within the program.

(C) The Military Department shall enter into a memorandum of agreement with an appropriate school district or a county office of education for the purpose of providing educational services for students enrolled in a National Guard Youth Challenge Program. The school district or county office of education with which the department contracts shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with any applicable requirements imposed by the Education Code.

(b) A new program, except for the California Cadet Corps, may only be established as provided in subdivision (a) if funds are appropriated for purposes of the program in the annual Budget Act or any other act.