

HOUSE BILL 126

By Hodges

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,
Chapter 7, relative to retired veterans.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 7, Part 1, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

(a) For purposes of this section, "veteran" means a Tennessee resident who entered and served honorably in the United States armed forces.

(b) Notwithstanding § 49-7-202, the Tennessee higher education commission shall create a baccalaureate degree for veterans who retire with twenty (20) years of service. Each state institution of higher education that offers a baccalaureate degree program must award the degree created by the commission under this subsection (b).

(c) Notwithstanding § 49-7-110, a veteran who retires with twenty (20) years of service does not have to earn credit in American history for a state institution of higher education to award the veteran the baccalaureate degree created by the commission.

(d) Nothing in this section requires a state institution of higher education to change the academic requirements for any other degree, credential, or certificate offered by the institution for a veteran who retires with twenty (20) years of service.

SECTION 2. The Tennessee higher education commission, each state university board of trustees, and the board of trustees for the University of Tennessee are authorized to promulgate rules to effectuate the purposes of this act. The rules must be promulgated in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, compiled in title 4, chapter 5.

SECTION 3.

(a) For purposes of promulgating rules, this act shall take effect on the date, if any, on which the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) approves state institutions of higher education to award the baccalaureate degree created by the Tennessee higher education commission pursuant to this act without losing the institutions' SACS accreditation. The executive director of the Tennessee higher education commission shall certify in writing to the executive secretary of the Tennessee code commission the date, if any, on which SACS approves state institutions of higher education to award the baccalaureate degree created by the Tennessee higher education commission pursuant to this act without losing the institutions' SACS accreditation.

(b) For all other purposes, this act shall take effect on July 1 of the year immediately following the date, if any, on which the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) approves state institutions of higher education to award the baccalaureate degree created by the Tennessee higher education commission pursuant to this act without losing the institutions' SACS accreditation. The executive director of the Tennessee higher education commission shall certify in writing to the executive secretary of the Tennessee code commission the date, if any, on which SACS approves state institutions of higher education to award the baccalaureate degree created by the Tennessee higher education commission pursuant to this act without losing the institutions' SACS accreditation.