

JAN 27 2011

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Senate of Pennsylvania

DATE: January 26, 2011
TO: All Senators
FROM: Senator Bob Mensch *BM*
SUBJECT: Co-sponsorship # 2 - State Military College Legislative Appointment Initiative Program

I am re-introducing legislation to establish the State Military College Legislative Appointment Initiative Program which would enable each member of the General Assembly to form a State military college selection committee for the purpose of recommending an eligible student who resides in the legislative district for initial enrollment in VMFC. The Ethics Commission would be charged with developing guidelines to govern the establishment and functions of the committee in order ensure conflicts of interest or other ethics violations be avoided. The legislation would require members who form local committees to file an annual report with the Commission. The program would sunset after five years.

Valley Forge Military Academy & College (VFMA&C) has a long tradition of providing character-based education within an academic and military environment to young men and women who have gone on to become military leaders, industry executives, government officials, professional athletes, Rhoades Scholars and White House Fellows. Valley Forge Military College (VFMC) is a two-year, transfer program from which almost all students go on to attend four-year colleges and universities, most at Tier 1 schools. The college also has the only Early Commissioning Program (ECP) in the Northeast United States. Successful completion of the program results in VFMC graduates earning commissions as second lieutenants in the U.S. Army in two years rather than four as is the case with ROTC programs at other colleges and universities.

The state House of Representatives adopted a resolution last session which enables each House member to appoint a qualified constituent to the freshman class at VFMC each year. The appointee is eligible to receive a scholarship funded entirely through VFMC. Members are encouraged to appoint local selection committees to assist them in identifying and selecting applicants. The House Ethics Committee developed guidelines for the program.

While I applaud this initiative, I believe the Legislative Appointment Initiative Program should be provided for within statute and be governed by guidelines developed by the State Ethics Commission so there is statutory authority and outside oversight.

This was SB 1318 of last session and co-sponsors were PICCOLA , BOSCOLA , FONTANA , ALLOWAY, ARGALL , PIPPY , LEACH , ERICKSON , BAKER , FARNESE, STACK , BRUBAKER and BROWNE

If you would like to co-sponsor this legislation, please call my office at 787-3110 or email Geri Sarfert, legislative director, at gsarfert@pasen.gov.

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