

ASSEMBLY, No. 5379

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 23, 2021

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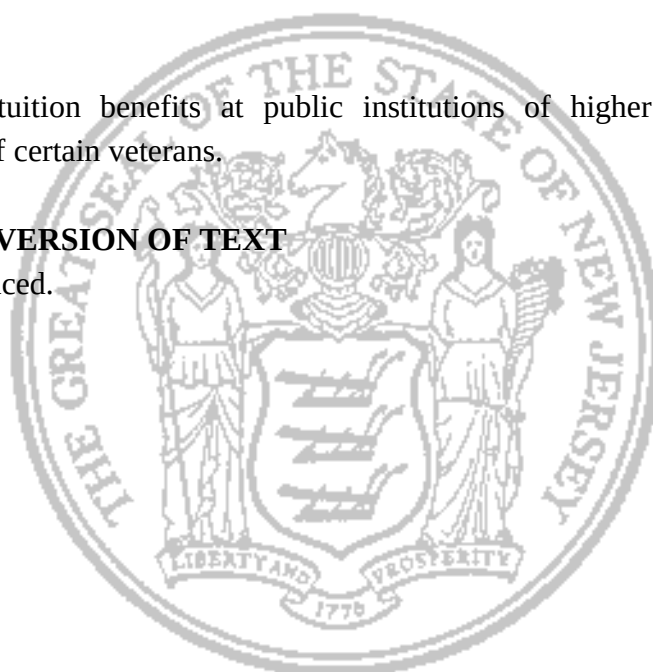
Assemblywoman Dunn

SYNOPSIS

Provides tuition benefits at public institutions of higher education for dependents of certain veterans.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/24/2021)

1 **AN ACT** concerning higher education benefits for the dependents of
2 certain veterans and supplementing chapter 62 of Title 18A of
3 the New Jersey Statutes.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*

7
8 1. For the purposes of this act:

9 “Child” means an individual between the ages of 17 and 26 who
10 is the child of a veteran.

11 “Partner” means a veteran’s partner in a civil union as defined in
12 section 2 of P.L.2006, c.103 (C.37:1-29), or a veteran’s domestic
13 partner as defined in section 3 of P.L.2003, c.246 (C.26:8A-3).

14 “Permanently and totally disabled” means a veteran who has
15 been honorably discharged or released under honorable
16 circumstances from active service and who has been declared by the
17 United States Department of Veterans Affairs or its successor to
18 have a service-connected total or 100 percent permanent disability.

19 “Student fee” means any amount, other than tuition, which
20 appears on a student tuition bill as a separately assessed item and
21 which is a mandatory charge of the institution.

22 “Veteran” means a citizen and resident of this State who served
23 on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States, a Reserve
24 component of the Armed Forces of the United States, the National
25 Guard, or a Reserve component of the National Guard.

26
27 2. a. A spouse, partner, or child of a veteran who was killed in
28 the line of duty during active military service, or who has been
29 declared to be a prisoner of war or a person missing in action by the
30 United States Department of Defense, or who is permanently and
31 totally disabled, or who has died from a service-connected disability
32 after being honorably discharged or released under honorable
33 circumstances from active service, shall be eligible to receive free
34 undergraduate tuition and student fees at a public institution of
35 higher education, provided that:

36 (1) the veteran was a resident of New Jersey at the time of entry
37 into active duty;

38 (2) the spouse, partner, or child is a resident of New Jersey;

39 (3) the spouse, partner, or child has been accepted to pursue a
40 course of undergraduate study at a public institution of higher
41 education and is enrolled as an undergraduate student in good
42 standing at that institution; and

43 (4) the spouse, partner, or child has applied for all available
44 State student grants and scholarships and all available federal
45 student grants and scholarships for which the spouse, partner, or
46 child is eligible.

47 The maximum tuition benefit under this act for an eligible
48 individual attending a public four-year institution of higher

1 education shall not exceed the total number of credits necessary to
2 complete a baccalaureate degree program at the institution, as
3 determined by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority.
4 The maximum tuition benefit under this act for an eligible
5 individual attending a county college shall not exceed the total
6 number of credits necessary to complete an associate degree
7 program at the college, as determined by the Higher Education
8 Student Assistance Authority.

9 b. In the case of a spouse or partner of a veteran, eligibility for
10 benefits under this act shall be limited to a period of 10 years from
11 the date of the death, determination of permanent and total
12 disability, or determination of prisoner of war or missing in action
13 status of the veteran. A spouse or partner of a veteran is ineligible
14 for benefits upon a remarriage or entry into a new civil union or
15 domestic partnership.

16
17 3. The Higher Education Student Assistance Authority, in
18 consultation with the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs,
19 shall develop procedures to determine the eligibility of an applicant
20 for benefits under this act. Upon the approval of an application for
21 benefits, the authority shall notify the applicant and the public
22 institution of higher education at which the applicant is enrolled of
23 eligibility.

24
25 4. The State shall reimburse a public institution of higher
26 education for the cost of tuition and student fees which have been
27 waived for each eligible spouse, partner, or child of a veteran
28 pursuant to the provisions of this act.

29
30 5. The Higher Education Student Assistance Authority shall
31 adopt regulations pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act,"
32 P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), necessary to effectuate the
33 provisions of this act.

34
35 6. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to
36 the first full academic year beginning after the effective date of this
37 act.

38 39 40 STATEMENT

41
42 This bill provides free undergraduate tuition and student fees at
43 public institutions of higher education to the child, spouse, civil
44 union partner or domestic partner of certain New Jersey veterans.
45 The benefits will apply to a child, spouse, civil union partner or
46 domestic partner of a New Jersey resident who served on active
47 duty in the Armed Forces of the United States or a Reserve
48 component, or the National Guard or a Reserve component, and

1 who: (1) was killed in the line of duty during active military
2 service; (2) has been declared to be a prisoner of war or a person
3 missing in action by the United States Department of Defense; (3)
4 has been honorably discharged or released under honorable
5 circumstances from active service and has been declared by the
6 United States Department of Veterans Affairs to have a service-
7 connected total or 100 percent permanent disability; or (4) has died
8 from a service-connected disability after being honorably
9 discharged or released under honorable circumstances from active
10 service. The maximum tuition benefit under the bill for an eligible
11 individual attending a public four-year institution of higher
12 education will not exceed the total number of credits necessary to
13 complete a baccalaureate degree program at the institution, as
14 determined by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority
15 (HESAA). The maximum tuition benefit for an eligible individual
16 attending a county college will not exceed the total number of
17 credits necessary to complete an associate degree program at the
18 college, as determined by HESAA.

19 In order for a child, spouse, or partner of a veteran to be eligible
20 for benefits under the bill, the following conditions must be met: (1)
21 the veteran was a resident of New Jersey at the time of entry into
22 active duty; (2) the spouse, partner, or child is a resident of New
23 Jersey; (3) the spouse, partner, or child has been accepted to pursue
24 a course of undergraduate study at a public institution of higher
25 education and is enrolled as an undergraduate student in good
26 standing at that institution; and (4) the spouse, partner, or child has
27 applied for all available State and federal student grants and
28 scholarships for which he is eligible.

29 The child of a veteran must be between the ages of 17 and 26 to
30 be eligible for benefits under the bill. In the case of a spouse, civil
31 union partner, or domestic partner of a veteran, eligibility for
32 benefits is limited to a period of 10 years from the date of the death,
33 determination of permanent and total disability, or determination of
34 prisoner of war or missing in action status of the veteran. A
35 veteran's spouse or partner is ineligible for benefits upon a
36 remarriage or entry into a new civil union or domestic partnership.

37 The bill provides that HESAA, in consultation with the
38 Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, will develop
39 procedures to determine the eligibility of an applicant for benefits.
40 The State will reimburse a public institution of higher education for
41 the cost of tuition and student fees that have been waived for each
42 eligible spouse, partner, or child of a veteran pursuant to the bill's
43 provisions.