

**SB169 INTRODUCED**



1 SB169  
2 JG9TNFN-1  
3 By Senator Kelley  
4 RFD: Finance and Taxation Education  
5 First Read: 28-Feb-24



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SYNOPSIS:

Under existing law, educational benefits up to the undergraduate level are available to eligible dependents of deceased or disabled veterans, of those veterans who are listed as missing in action, and of those veterans who were prisoners of war while serving as a member of the United States Armed Forces.

This bill would expand educational benefits to eligible dependents to include post-bachelor and graduate studies in a medical field.

A BILL  
TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

Relating to Military Affairs; to amend Sections 31-6-4, 31-6-5, and 31-6-6, Code of Alabama 1975, to expand educational benefits for eligible dependents of deceased or disabled veterans and of veterans who are listed as missing in action and veterans who were prisoners of war while serving as a member of the United States Armed Forces, to include post-bachelor and graduate studies in a medical field.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. Sections 31-6-4, 31-6-5, and 31-6-6, Code of



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29 Alabama 1975, are amended to read as follows:

30 "§31-6-4

31 (a) Any child whose father or mother:

32 (1) Was killed or died in line of duty or is listed as  
33 missing in action or is or was a prisoner of war or whose  
34 death or permanent total disabilities were service-connected  
35 while serving as a member of the armed forces;

36 (2) Died from a disability incurred from military  
37 service, as established by the State Department of Veterans'  
38 Affairs, after having been discharged under conditions other  
39 than dishonorable and after having served at least 90 days  
40 consecutively in the armed forces prior to ~~and/or subsequent~~  
41 ~~to~~ the date on which the disability occurred, or who was  
42 honorably discharged by reason of a qualifying  
43 service-connected disability after serving less than 90 days;

44 (3) Was killed or died while on state active duty  
45 status as defined in Section 31-12-1, or whose death results  
46 proximately and within three years from an injury received  
47 while on state active duty status; or

48 (4) Has been assigned 100 percent permanent or total  
49 disability rated by the United States Department of Veterans'  
50 ~~Administration Affairs~~, or was discharged or retired from the  
51 armed forces with a 40 percent or more disability and  
52 maintained that percentage, or has been assigned 40 percent or  
53 more disability by the United States Department of Veterans'  
54 Affairs as a result of a service-connected condition  
55 regardless of when the disability rating is assigned; may  
56 attend any qualifying school for a period of five standard



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57 academic years, not to exceed 45 months or the equivalent of  
58 45 months if enrolled part-time, pursuant to the tuition  
59 reimbursement guidelines as provided in subsection (c).  
60 Training under this section must be initiated prior to the  
61 child's thirtieth birthday, and must be completed within eight  
62 years after its initiation, except for delays caused by  
63 military service during the training period, and in no case  
64 may training be received under this chapter beyond the  
65 thirty-eighth birthday of the child.

66 (b) The educational benefits provided by this section  
67 to children making application for benefits for the first time  
68 beginning with the fall term of the 2014-2015 academic year,  
69 and thereafter, shall be ~~limited to~~ available for undergraduate  
70 courses of study and post-bachelor and graduate courses of  
71 study in a medical field ~~only~~, and the value of tuition paid  
72 shall be limited to the in-state tuition rate of the  
73 qualifying school attended.

74 (c) For those first filing for benefits under this  
75 chapter on or after July 31, 2017, and for those attending a  
76 qualifying private school, the educational benefit shall be  
77 for tuition reimbursement and books and fees reimbursement.  
78 The value of tuition paid per semester hour, ~~or equivalent~~,  
79 shall be limited to the rate of the Department of Defense  
80 Tuition Assistance Cap. The value of the books and fees paid  
81 per semester shall be limited to one thousand dollars (\$1,000)  
82 per student.

83 (d) For the purpose of the minimum disability  
84 requirement provided for in subdivision (a) (4), the dependent



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85 of any veteran whose disability rating as of July 31, 2017, is  
86 at least 20 percent but less than 40 percent shall qualify for  
87 the benefits of this chapter, provided that the dependent  
88 shall file application for the benefits before July 31, ~~2023~~  
89 2025, and the dependent is reasonably expected to be eligible  
90 to attend a qualifying school in the next academic year."

91 "§31-6-5

92 (a) Any spouse or widow whose spouse, during their  
93 marriage:

94 (1) Was killed or died in the line of duty or is listed  
95 as missing in action or is or was a prisoner of war while  
96 serving as a member of the armed forces;

97 (2) Died from a disability incurred from military  
98 service; or

99 (3) Is 100 percent permanently and totally disabled,  
100 whose permanent and total disabilities were service-connected;  
101 shall be entitled to training in any qualifying school for a  
102 period of five standard academic years, not to exceed 45  
103 months, or to training for the equivalent of 45 months if  
104 enrolled part-time, pursuant to the tuition reimbursement  
105 guidelines as provided in subsection ~~(e)~~ (d). One change of  
106 program will be allowed without counseling. All training  
107 received under this section must be completed within eight  
108 years after its initiation.

109 (b) This section shall not apply to the spouse of any  
110 deceased serviceman or veteran who has remarried prior to  
111 applying for and obtaining educational benefits under this  
112 section, and should any spouse of the deceased serviceman or



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113 veteran remarry during the time he or she is in attendance  
114 upon any of the qualifying schools mentioned in this section,  
115 ~~then~~ he or she shall pay tuition and fees for the course of  
116 study or attendance upon the qualifying school from the time  
117 of the remarriage.

118 ~~(b)~~ (c) The educational benefits provided by this  
119 section to spouses and widows making application for benefits  
120 for the first time beginning with the fall term of the  
121 2014-2015 academic year, and thereafter, shall be ~~limited~~  
122 ~~to~~ available for undergraduate courses of study ~~only~~ and  
123 post-bachelor and graduate courses of study in a medical  
124 field, and the value of tuition paid shall be limited to the  
125 in-state tuition rate of the qualifying school attended.

126 ~~(e)~~ (d) For those first filing for benefits under this  
127 chapter on or after July 31, 2017, and for those attending a  
128 qualifying private school, the educational benefit shall be  
129 for tuition reimbursement and books and fees reimbursement.  
130 The value of tuition paid per semester hour, or equivalent,  
131 shall be limited to the rate of the Department of Defense  
132 Tuition Assistance Cap. The value of the books and fees paid  
133 per semester shall be limited to one thousand dollars (\$1,000)  
134 per student."

135 "§31-6-6

136 (a) The spouse and children of any veteran who is  
137 suffering from 40 to 90 percent service-connected disability  
138 brought about from service in the Armed Forces of the United  
139 States, or the widow and children of a deceased veteran who  
140 was suffering from 40 percent or more of service-connected



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141 disability at the time of death, as established by the State  
142 Department of Veterans' Affairs, shall be entitled to the  
143 following educational advantages and opportunities:

144 (1) The spouse or widow shall be entitled to up to 27  
145 months of schooling, or the equivalent of 27 months if  
146 enrolled part-time, in any qualifying school, pursuant to the  
147 tuition reimbursement guidelines as provided in subsection  
148 (d). One change of program will be allowed without counseling.  
149 All training received at qualifying schools under this  
150 subdivision must be completed within a period of six years  
151 after its initiation.

152 (2) Each child of a disabled veteran shall be entitled  
153 to five standard academic years, or the equivalent of 45  
154 months if enrolled part-time, in any qualifying school  
155 pursuant to the tuition reimbursement guidelines as provided  
156 in subsection (d). One change of program will be allowed  
157 without counseling. Training under this subdivision must be  
158 initiated prior to the child's twenty-sixth birthday, and must  
159 be completed within eight years after its initiation, except  
160 for delays caused by military service during the training  
161 period, and in no case may training be received under this  
162 section beyond the thirty-fourth birthday of the child.

163 (b) For the purpose of the minimum disability  
164 requirement provided for in subsection (a), the dependent of  
165 any veteran whose disability rating as of July 31, 2017, is at  
166 least 20 percent but less than 40 percent shall qualify for  
167 the benefits of this chapter, provided that the dependent  
168 shall file application for benefits before July 31, ~~2023~~ 2025,



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169 and the dependent is reasonably expected to be eligible to  
170 attend a qualifying school in the next academic year.

171 (c) The educational benefits provided by this section  
172 to spouses, children, and widows making application for  
173 benefits for the first time beginning with the fall term of  
174 the 2014-2015 academic year, and thereafter, shall be ~~limited~~  
175 ~~to~~ available for undergraduate courses of study ~~only~~ and  
176 post-bachelor and graduate courses of study in a medical  
177 field, and the value of tuition paid shall be limited to the  
178 in-state tuition rate of the qualifying school attended.

179 (d) For those first filing for benefits under this  
180 chapter on or after July 31, 2017, and for those attending a  
181 qualifying private school, the educational benefit shall be  
182 for tuition reimbursement and books and fees reimbursement.  
183 The value of tuition paid per semester hour,  (or equivalent) ,  
184 shall be limited to the rate of the Department of Defense  
185 Tuition Assistance Cap. The value of the books and fees paid  
186 per semester shall be limited to one thousand dollars (\$1,000)  
187 per student."

188 Section 2. This act shall become effective on January  
189 1, 2025.