

HB487 ENGROSSED



1 HB487
2 JPZ9GFY-2
3 By Representatives Moore (P), Brown, Paschal, Robertson,
4 Oliver, Starnes
5 RFD: Ways and Means Education
6 First Read: 01-Apr-25



HB487 Engrossed

A BILL
TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

Related to the Alabama G.I. Dependent Scholarship Program; to amend Sections 31-6-4 and 31-6-6, as last amended by Act 2024-399 of the 2024 Regular Session and Section 31-6-9, Code of Alabama 1975; to reduce the minimum disability rating required for participation in the program; and to add Section 31-6-11.1 to the Code of Alabama 1975, to establish a pilot program to admit additional dependents of certain disabled veterans into the scholarship program.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. Sections 31-6-4 and 31-6-6, as last amended by Act 2024-399 of the 2024 Regular Session, and Section 31-6-9, Code of Alabama 1975, are amended to read as follows:

"§31-6-4

(a) (1) Any child whose father or mother meets any of the following criteria may attend any qualifying school for a period of five standard academic years, not to exceed 45 months or the equivalent of 45 months if enrolled part-time, pursuant to the tuition reimbursement guidelines as provided in subsection (c):

a. Was killed or died in line of duty or is listed as missing in action or is or was a prisoner of war or whose



HB487 Engrossed

29 death or permanent total disabilities were service-connected
30 while serving as a member of the ~~armed forces~~Armed Forces†.

31 b. Died from a disability incurred from military
32 service, as established by the State Department of
33 ~~Veterans'~~Veterans Affairs, after having been discharged under
34 conditions other than dishonorable and after having served at
35 least 90 days consecutively in the ~~armed forces~~Armed Forces
36 prior to and/or subsequent to the date on which the disability
37 occurred, or who was honorably discharged by reason of a
38 qualifying service-connected disability after serving less
39 than 90 days†.

40 c. Was killed or died while on state active duty status
41 as defined in Section 31-12-1, or whose death results
42 proximately and within three years from an injury received
43 while on state active duty status†~~or~~.

44 d. Has been assigned 100 percent permanent or total
45 disability rated by the United States ~~Veterans' Administration~~
46 Department fo Veterans Affairs, or was discharged or retired
47 from the ~~armed forces~~Armed Forces with a ~~40~~30 percent or more
48 disability and maintained that percentage.

49 (2) Training under this section must be initiated prior
50 to the child's thirtieth birthday, and must be completed
51 within eight years after its initiation, except for delays
52 caused by military service during the training period, and in
53 no case may training be received under this chapter beyond the
54 thirty-eighth birthday of the child.

55 (b) The educational benefits provided by this section
56 to children making application for benefits for the first time



HB487 Engrossed

beginning with the fall term of the 2014-2015 academic year, and thereafter, shall be limited to undergraduate courses of study only, and the value of tuition paid shall be limited to the in-state tuition rate of the qualifying school attended.

(c) For those first filing for benefits under this chapter on or after July 31, 2017, and for those attending a qualifying private school, the educational benefit shall be for tuition reimbursement and books and fees reimbursement. The value of tuition paid per semester hour ~~(or equivalent),~~ or equivalent, shall be limited to four hundred dollars (\$400). The value of the books and fees paid per semester shall be limited to one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per student.

~~(d) For the purpose of the minimum disability requirement provided for in subdivision (a) (4), the dependent of any veteran whose disability rating as of July 31, 2017, is at least 20 percent but less than 40 percent shall qualify for the benefits of this chapter, provided that the dependent shall file application for the benefits before July 31, 2023, and the dependent is reasonably expected to be eligible to attend a qualifying school in the next academic year."~~

"§31-6-6

(a) The spouse and children of any veteran who is suffering from ~~40~~30 to 90 percent service-connected disability brought about from service in the Armed Forces of the United States, or the widow and children of a deceased veteran who was suffering from ~~40~~30 percent or more of service-connected disability at the time of death, as established by the State Department of ~~Veterans~~ Veterans Affairs, shall be entitled to



HB487 Engrossed

the following educational advantages and opportunities:

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

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

~~(b) For the purpose of the minimum disability requirement provided for in subsection (a), the dependent of any veteran whose disability rating as of July 31, 2017, is at least 20 percent but less than 40 percent shall qualify for the benefits of this chapter, provided that the dependent shall file application for benefits before July 31, 2023, and the dependent is reasonably expected to be eligible to attend a qualifying school in the next academic year.~~



HB487 Engrossed

113 ~~(e)~~ (b) The educational benefits provided by this
114 section to spouses, children, and widows making application
115 for benefits for the first time beginning with the fall term
116 of the 2014-2015 academic year, and thereafter, shall be
117 limited to undergraduate courses of study only, and the value
118 of tuition paid shall be limited to the in-state tuition rate
119 of the qualifying school attended.

120 ~~(d)~~ (c) For those first filing for benefits under this
121 chapter on or after July 31, 2017, and for those attending a
122 qualifying private school, the educational benefit shall be
123 for tuition reimbursement and books and fees reimbursement.
124 The value of tuition paid per semester hour ~~(or equivalent),~~
125 or equivalent, shall be limited to four hundred dollars
126 (\$400). The value of the books and fees paid per semester
127 shall be limited to one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per
128 student."

129 "§31-6-9

130 (a) For those dependents who first file for benefits
131 under this chapter prior to July 31, 2017, the benefits
132 provided under this chapter shall be in addition to any other
133 state or federal benefits to which that dependent may be
134 entitled.

135 (b) For dependents who first file for benefits under
136 this chapter on or after July 31, 2017, and for those
137 attending a qualifying private school:

138 (1) To the extent permitted by law, prior to applying
139 any benefits provided for under this chapter, institutional
140 certifying officials and financial aid officials shall first



HB487 Engrossed

141 apply other federal, state, institutional, and ~~third~~
142 ~~party~~third-party scholarships and grants awarded to the
143 dependent for that academic period for payment of required
144 educational expenses during an academic period-;

145 (2) A completed Free Application for Federal Student
146 Aid (FAFSA), or the equivalent, must be submitted to the
147 United States Department of Education for each year in which
148 the dependent receives benefits under this chapter. The
149 dependent shall have applied for all federal student financial
150 aid grants, including, but not limited to, Pell Grants,
151 Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants, and Education and
152 Training Vouchers, identified as being available for the
153 student's application by Federal Student Aid, an office of the
154 United States Department of Education, or its successor
155 agency-;

156 (3) All students receiving educational benefits under
157 this chapter and the qualifying schools they attend must
158 comply with the standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress
159 (SAP) as required for Title IV benefits under the Higher
160 Education Act and as defined by that qualifying school. Those
161 students who would no longer be eligible to receive Title IV
162 benefits due to a failure to meet SAP standards shall no
163 longer be eligible to receive benefits under this chapter.
164 Each qualifying school shall notify the State Department of
165 ~~Veterans'~~Veterans Affairs of any student who currently holds a
166 certificate of eligibility for benefits under this chapter who
167 is no longer eligible to receive benefits due to a failure to
168 meet SAP standards and the effective date of that change in



HB487 Engrossed

169 eligibility-; and

170 (4) The dependent shall ensure that all qualifying
171 schools he or she attends under this program are authorized to
172 release the personally identifiable information to the State
173 Department of ~~Veterans~~-Veterans Affairs as is required for the
174 determination of that dependent's continued eligibility and as
175 required for the completion of all reports required by law.

176 (c) Any dependent who receives benefits under this
177 chapter, and whose benefit period is interrupted due to
178 accident, injury, or illness, shall have the benefit time
179 period which is lost due to the accident, illness, or injury
180 restored to him or her.

181 (d) Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter
182 to the contrary, dependents of any veteran whose disability
183 rating, if any, prior to May 23, 2017, was less than 20
184 percent, but who had a claim for compensation pending prior to
185 that date which resulted in a final award by the United States
186 Department of Veterans Affairs of at least 20 percent, shall
187 be eligible for education benefits as the chapter read prior
188 to May 23, 2017, if the dependent files an application for
189 benefits under this chapter within six months of that final
190 adjudication and provides proof satisfactory to the State
191 Department of ~~Veterans~~-Veterans Affairs that he or she
192 qualifies under this exception and currently satisfies the
193 eligibility requirements as the chapter read prior to May 23,
194 2017."

195 Section 2. Section 31-6-11.1 is added to the Code of
196 Alabama 1975, to read as follows:



HB487 Engrossed

§31-6-11.1

(a) Notwithstanding provisions of Section 31-6-11, Code of Alabama 1975, to the contrary, beginning on January 1, 2026, dependents who would be eligible to receive benefits under this chapter but for their inability to show the qualifying veteran was a permanent resident of the State of Alabama for at least one year immediately prior to his or her entrance into service may be eligible to receive educational benefits under this chapter where they can show the qualifying veteran:

(1) Has, or had at the time of his or her death, a minimum disability rating of 50 percent; and

(2) Has been a permanent resident of this state for at least five years immediately prior to the filing of the application for benefits under this section or immediately prior to his or her death if the veteran is deceased.

(b) The educational benefits provided by this section shall be provided to not more than 100 dependents annually. Priority of dependents accepted shall be based on the highest disability rating of the qualifying veterans.

(c) The benefits provided by this section shall be the same as benefits provided for dependents as described in Chapter 6, Title 31, Code of Alabama 1975.

(d) The educational benefits authorized pursuant to this section shall expire on December 31, 2027, unless extended by an act of the Legislature.

Section 3. This act shall become effective on June 1, 2025.



HB487 Engrossed

225
226
227

House of Representatives

228 Read for the first time and referred01-Apr-25
229 to the House of Representatives
230 committee on Ways and Means
231 Education
232
233 Read for the second time and placed17-Apr-25
234 on the calendar:
235 2 amendments
236
237 Read for the third time and passed22-Apr-25
238 as amended
239 Yeas 103
240 Nays 0
241 Abstains 0
242
243
244 John Treadwell
245 Clerk
246