

HB487 INTRODUCED



1 HB487
2 TNAF915-1
3 By Representatives Moore (P), Brown, Paschal, Robertson,
4 Oliver, Starnes
5 RFD: Ways and Means Education
6 First Read: 01-Apr-25



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SYNOPSIS:

Under current law, the Alabama G.I. Dependent Scholarship Program provides scholarships to eligible dependents of disabled and deceased veterans that meet certain residency and disability requirements.

This bill would reduce the minimum disability rating for participation in the program for a disabled veteran to 20 percent.

Under current law the scholarship program is restricted to being the payer of last resort for school tuition and fees after all other scholarships and grants have been applied.

This bill would remove some restrictions that require that benefits of this program only be used after all federal or other benefits have been used.

This bill would also establish a pilot program to allow a certain number of dependents of eligible veterans to participate in the scholarship program.

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



HB487 INTRODUCED

29 by Act 2024-399 of the 2024 Regular Session and Section
30 31-6-9, Code of Alabama 1975; to reduce the minimum disability
31 rating required for participation in the program; to require
32 state educational benefits for students attending four-year
33 institutions of higher education learning to be applied only
34 after all other available resources have been applied; and to
35 establish a pilot program to admit additional dependents of
36 certain disabled veterans into the scholarship program.

37 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

38 Section 1. Sections 31-6-4 and 31-6-6, as last amended
39 by Act 2024-399 of the 2024 Regular Session, and Section
40 31-6-9, Code of Alabama 1975, are amended to read as follows:

41 "§31-6-4

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

48 a. Was killed or died in line of duty or is listed as
49 missing in action or is or was a prisoner of war or whose
50 death or permanent total disabilities were service-connected
51 while serving as a member of the ~~armed forces~~Armed Forces.

52 b. Died from a disability incurred from military
53 service, as established by the State Department of
54 ~~Veterans~~Veterans Affairs, after having been discharged under
55 conditions other than dishonorable and after having served at
56 least 90 days consecutively in the ~~armed forces~~Armed Forces



HB487 INTRODUCED

57 prior to and/or subsequent to the date on which the disability
58 occurred, or who was honorably discharged by reason of a
59 qualifying service-connected disability after serving less
60 than 90 days~~+~~.

61 c. Was killed or died while on state active duty status
62 as defined in Section 31-12-1, or whose death results
63 proximately and within three years from an injury received
64 while on state active duty status~~+~~.

65 d. Has been assigned 100 percent permanent or total
66 disability rated by the United States ~~Veterans' Administration~~
67 Department fo Veterans Affairs, or was discharged or retired
68 from the ~~armed forces~~Armed Forces with a ~~40~~20 percent or more
69 disability and maintained that percentage.

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

76 (b) The educational benefits provided by this section
77 to children making application for benefits for the first time
78 beginning with the fall term of the 2014-2015 academic year,
79 and thereafter, shall be limited to undergraduate courses of
80 study only, and the value of tuition paid shall be limited to
81 the in-state tuition rate of the qualifying school attended.

82 (c) For those first filing for benefits under this
83 chapter on or after July 31, 2017, and for those attending a
84 qualifying private school, the educational benefit shall be



HB487 INTRODUCED

85 for tuition reimbursement and books and fees reimbursement.
86 The value of tuition paid per semester hour ~~(or equivalent),~~
87 or equivalent, shall be limited to four hundred dollars
88 (\$400). The value of the books and fees paid per semester
89 shall be limited to one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per student.

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

98 "§31-6-6

99 (a) The spouse and children of any veteran who is
100 suffering from ~~40~~20 to 90 percent service-connected disability
101 brought about from service in the Armed Forces of the United
102 States, or the widow and children of a deceased veteran who
103 was suffering from ~~40~~20 percent or more of service-connected
104 disability at the time of death, as established by the State
105 Department of ~~Veterans'~~Veterans Affairs, shall be entitled to
106 the following educational advantages and opportunities:

107 (1) The spouse or widow shall be entitled to up to 27
108 months of schooling, or the equivalent of 27 months if
109 enrolled part-time, in any qualifying school, pursuant to the
110 tuition reimbursement guidelines as provided in subsection
111 ~~(d)~~ (c). One change of program shall be allowed without
112 counseling. All training received at qualifying schools under



HB487 INTRODUCED

113 this subdivision must be completed within a period of six
114 years after its initiation.

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

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

134 ~~(e)~~ (b) The educational benefits provided by this
135 section to spouses, children, and widows making application
136 for benefits for the first time beginning with the fall term
137 of the 2014-2015 academic year, and thereafter, shall be
138 limited to undergraduate courses of study only, and the value
139 of tuition paid shall be limited to the in-state tuition rate
140 of the qualifying school attended.



HB487 INTRODUCED

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

150 "§31-6-9

151 (a) For those dependents who first file for benefits
152 under this chapter prior to July 31, 2017, the benefits
153 provided under this chapter shall be in addition to any other
154 state or federal benefits to which that dependent may be
155 entitled.

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

159 (1) To the extent permitted by law, prior to applying
160 any benefits provided for under this chapter, institutional
161 certifying officials and financial aid officials at four-year
162 institutions of higher education shall first apply other
163 federal, state, institutional, and ~~third-party~~ third-party
164 scholarships and grants awarded to the dependent for that
165 academic period for payment of required educational expenses
166 during an academic period. Institutional certifying officials
167 and financial aid officials at two-year institutions of higher
168 education shall apply the benefits under this chapter before



HB487 INTRODUCED

169 other federal, state, institutional, and third-party
170 scholarships and grants awarded to the dependent for that
171 academic period;

172 (2) A completed Free Application for Federal Student
173 Aid (FAFSA), or the equivalent, must be submitted to the
174 United States Department of Education for each year in which
175 the dependent receives benefits under this chapter. The
176 dependent shall have applied for all federal student financial
177 aid grants, including, but not limited to, Pell Grants,
178 Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants, and Education and
179 Training Vouchers, identified as being available for the
180 student's application by Federal Student Aid, an office of the
181 United States Department of Education, or its successor
182 agency-; i

183 (3) All students receiving educational benefits under
184 this chapter and the qualifying schools they attend must
185 comply with the standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress
186 (SAP) as required for Title IV benefits under the Higher
187 Education Act and as defined by that qualifying school. Those
188 students who would no longer be eligible to receive Title IV
189 benefits due to a failure to meet SAP standards shall no
190 longer be eligible to receive benefits under this chapter.
191 Each qualifying school shall notify the State Department of
192 ~~Veterans'~~Veterans Affairs of any student who currently holds a
193 certificate of eligibility for benefits under this chapter who
194 is no longer eligible to receive benefits due to a failure to
195 meet SAP standards and the effective date of that change in
196 eligibility-; and



HB487 INTRODUCED

197 (4) The dependent shall ensure that all qualifying
198 schools he or she attends under this program are authorized to
199 release the personally identifiable information to the State
200 Department of ~~Veterans'~~Veterans Affairs as is required for the
201 determination of that dependent's continued eligibility and as
202 required for the completion of all reports required by law.

203 (c) Any dependent who receives benefits under this
204 chapter, and whose benefit period is interrupted due to
205 accident, injury, or illness, shall have the benefit time
206 period which is lost due to the accident, illness, or injury
207 restored to him or her.

208 (d) Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter
209 to the contrary, dependents of any veteran whose disability
210 rating, if any, prior to May 23, 2017, was less than 20
211 percent, but who had a claim for compensation pending prior to
212 that date which resulted in a final award by the United States
213 Department of Veterans Affairs of at least 20 percent, shall
214 be eligible for education benefits as the chapter read prior
215 to May 23, 2017, if the dependent files an application for
216 benefits under this chapter within six months of that final
217 adjudication and provides proof satisfactory to the State
218 Department of ~~Veterans'~~Veterans Affairs that he or she
219 qualifies under this exception and currently satisfies the
220 eligibility requirements as the chapter read prior to May 23,
221 2017."

222 Section 2. (a) Notwithstanding provisions of Section
223 31-6-11, Code of Alabama 1975, to the contrary, beginning on
224 January 1, 2026, dependents who would be eligible to receive



HB487 INTRODUCED

225 benefits under this chapter but for their inability to show
226 the qualifying veteran was a permanent resident of the State
227 of Alabama for at least one year immediately prior to his or
228 her entrance into service may be eligible to receive
229 educational benefits under this chapter where they can show
230 the qualifying veteran:

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

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

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

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

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

247 Section 3. This act shall become effective on June 1,
248 2025.