



**House Ways and Means Education Reported Substitute  
for HB487**

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



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

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

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

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

(2) Training under this section must be initiated prior to the child's thirtieth 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 chapter beyond the thirty-eighth birthday of the child.

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



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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



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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.~~



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~~(e)~~ (b) The educational benefits provided by this section to spouses, children, and widows making application for benefits for the first time 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.

~~(d)~~ (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."

"§31-6-9

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

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

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



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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



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eligibility-; and

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

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

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

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



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**§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.