

HB377 INTRODUCED



1 HB377

2 I3J51ZW-1

3 By Representatives Holk-Jones, Robertson, Rehm, Brown, Smith,
4 Paschal, Oliver, Lipscomb, Harrison, Pettus, Underwood,
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7 RFD: Ways and Means Education

8 First Read: 03-Feb-26



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4 SYNOPSIS:

5 Under the Alabama G.I. and Dependents'
6 Educational Benefit Act, educational benefits for up to
7 the undergraduate course level are available to
8 eligible children, spouses, and widows of deceased or
9 disabled veterans, veterans who are listed as missing
10 in action, and veterans who were prisoners of war while
11 serving in the United States Armed Forces.

12 This bill would expand these educational
13 benefits to include graduate courses in a medical
14 field.

15 This bill would limit the tuition that may be
16 charged.

17 This bill would also make nonsubstantive,
18 technical revisions to update the existing code
19 language to current style.

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22 A BILL

23 TO BE ENTITLED

24 AN ACT

25
26 Relating to Alabama G.I. and Dependents' Educational
27 Benefit Act; to amend Sections 31-6-2, 31-6-4, 31-6-5, and
28 31-6-6, Code of Alabama 1975, to expand educational benefits



29 for eligible children, spouses, and widows of certain veterans
30 to include graduate courses in a medical field; to limit
31 tuition that may be charged; and to make nonsubstantive,
32 technical revisions to update the existing code language to
33 current style.

34 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

35 Section 1. Sections 31-6-2, 31-6-4, 31-6-5, and 31-6-6,
36 Code of Alabama 1975, are amended to read as follows:

37 "§31-6-2

38 For the purposes of this chapter, the following terms
39 have the following meanings ~~ascribed to them by this section~~:

40 (1) ARMED FORCES. Includes the United States Army, Air
41 Force, Navy, Marine Corps, Space Force, and Coast Guard.

42 (2) COMPREHENSIVE TRANSITION AND POSTSECONDARY PROGRAM
43 FOR STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES. Has the same
44 meaning as in 20 U.S.C. § 1140.

45 (3) MEDICAL FIELD. Includes any professional physical
46 health care program, professional mental health care program,
47 allied health care program, and health care administration
48 program.

49 ~~(3)~~ (4) QUALIFYING PRIVATE SCHOOL. Any regionally
50 accredited private two-year or four-year institution of higher
51 education physically located in the state that receives a
52 direct appropriation from the state or whose resident students
53 may receive appropriations from the state through the Alabama
54 Student Grant Program.

55 ~~(4)~~ (5) QUALIFYING SCHOOL. An institution that is either
56 a qualifying state school or a qualifying private school ~~as~~



57 ~~defined by this chapter.~~

58 ~~(5)~~(6) QUALIFYING STATE SCHOOL. An Alabama public
59 two-year or four-year institution of higher education.

60 ~~(6)~~(7) SPOUSE. Husband or wife.

61 ~~(7)~~(8) TUITION. Fees for instruction.

62 ~~(8)~~(9) TUITION AND FEES. All fees known and classed as
63 instructional fees.

64 ~~(9)~~(10) WIDOW. An individual whose spouse is deceased
65 and who has not remarried."

66 "§31-6-4

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

73 a. Was killed or died in line of duty or is listed as
74 missing in action or is or was a prisoner of war or whose
75 death or permanent total disabilities were service-connected
76 while serving as a member of the armed forces~~r~~.

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



85 than 90 days.+

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

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

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

101 (b) For children applying for benefits for the first
102 time beginning with the fall term of the 2014-2015 academic
103 year, and thereafter, the total value of tuition charged may
104 not exceed the in-state tuition rate of the qualifying school
105 attended.

106 ~~(b)~~ (c) (1) The educational benefits provided by this
107 section to children making application for benefits for the
108 first time beginning with the fall term of the 2014-2015
109 academic year, and thereafter, shall be limited to
110 undergraduate courses of study~~only, and the value of tuition~~
111 ~~paid shall be limited to the in-state tuition rate of the~~
112 ~~qualifying school attended.~~



113 (2) Notwithstanding subdivision (1), commencing July
114 31, 2026, the educational benefits shall include graduate
115 courses of study in a medical field.

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

124 ~~(d)~~ (e) For the purpose of the minimum disability
125 requirement provided for in ~~subdivision (a)(4) paragraph~~
126 (a)(1)d., the dependent of any veteran whose disability rating
127 as of July 31, 2017, is at least 20 percent but less than 40
128 percent shall qualify for the benefits of this chapter,
129 provided that the dependent shall file an application for the
130 benefits before July 31, 2023, and the dependent is reasonably
131 expected to be eligible to attend a qualifying school in the
132 next academic year."

133 "§31-6-5

134 (a) (1) Any spouse or widow whose spouse, during their
135 marriage, meets any of the following criteria shall be
136 entitled to training in any qualifying school for a period of
137 five standard academic years, not to exceed 45 months, or to
138 training for the equivalent of 45 months if enrolled
139 part-time, pursuant to the tuition reimbursement guidelines as
140 provided in subsection ~~(e)~~ (d):



141 a. Was killed or died in the line of duty or is listed
142 as missing in action or is or was a prisoner of war while
143 serving as a member of the armed forces~~†~~.

144 b. Died from a disability incurred from military
145 service~~†~~.

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

150 d. Is 100 percent permanently and totally disabled,
151 whose permanent and total disabilities were service-connected.

152 (2) One change of program shall be allowed without
153 counseling. All training received under this section~~—must~~
154 shall be completed within eight years after its initiation.

155 (b) This section shall not apply to the spouse of any
156 deceased serviceman or veteran who has remarried prior to
157 applying for and obtaining educational benefits under this
158 section, ~~and should. If~~ any spouse of the deceased serviceman
159 or veteran~~—remarry~~ remarries during the time he or she is in
160 attendance upon any of the qualifying schools mentioned in
161 this section, ~~then~~ he or she shall pay tuition and fees for
162 the course of study or attendance upon the qualifying school
163 from the time of the remarriage.

164 (c) For spouses and widows applying for benefits for
165 the first time beginning with the fall term of the 2014-2015
166 academic year, and thereafter, the total value of tuition
167 charged may not exceed the in-state tuition rate of the
168 qualifying school attended.



169 ~~(b)~~ (d) (1) The educational benefits provided by this
170 section to spouses and widows making application for benefits
171 for the first time beginning with the fall term of the
172 2014-2015 academic year, and thereafter, shall be limited to
173 undergraduate courses of study only, ~~and the value of tuition~~
174 ~~paid shall be limited to the in-state tuition rate of the~~
175 ~~qualifying school attended.~~

176 (2) Notwithstanding subdivision (1), commencing July
177 31, 2026, the educational benefits shall include graduate
178 courses of study in a medical field.

179 ~~(e)~~ (e) 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 four hundred dollars (\$400). The value of
185 the books and fees paid per semester shall be limited to one
186 thousand dollars (\$1,000) per student."

187 "§31-6-6

188 (a) The spouse and children of any veteran who is
189 suffering from 40 to 90 percent service-connected disability
190 brought about from service in the Armed Forces of the United
191 States, or the widow and children of a deceased veteran who
192 was suffering from 40 percent or more of service-connected
193 disability at the time of death, as established by the State
194 Department of ~~Veterans'~~ Veterans Affairs, shall be entitled to
195 the following educational advantages and opportunities:

196 (1) The spouse or widow shall be entitled to up to 27



197 months of schooling, or the equivalent of 27 months if
198 enrolled part-time, in any qualifying school, pursuant to the
199 tuition reimbursement guidelines as provided in subsection
200 ~~(d)~~(e). One change of program shall be allowed without
201 counseling. All training received at qualifying schools under
202 this subdivision must be completed within a period of six
203 years after its initiation.

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

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

224 (c) For spouses, children, and widows applying for



225 benefits for the first time beginning with the fall term of
226 the 2014-2015 academic year, and thereafter, the total value
227 of tuition charged may not exceed the in-state tuition rate of
228 the qualifying school attended.

229 ~~(e)~~ (d) (1) The educational benefits provided by this
230 section to spouses, children, and widows making application
231 for benefits for the first time beginning with the fall term
232 of the 2014-2015 academic year, and thereafter, shall be
233 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.~~

236 (2) Notwithstanding subdivision (1), commencing July
237 31, 2026, the educational benefits shall include graduate
238 courses of study in a medical field.

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

247 Section 2. This act shall become effective on January
248 1, 2028.