

SENATE BILL NO. 716

103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR FITZWATER.

2851S.01H

KRISTINA MARTIN, Secretary

AN ACT

To amend chapter 173, RSMo, by adding thereto one new section relating to college tuition for dependents of certain veterans.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Missouri, as follows:

Section A. Chapter 173, RSMo, is amended by adding thereto one new section, to be known as section 173.237, to read as follows:

173.237. 1. This section shall be known and may be cited as the "Missouri Disabled Veterans' Dependents Tuition Waiver".

2. As used in this section, the following terms mean:

(1) "Board", the coordinating board for higher education;

(2) "Institution", any approved public institution, as defined in subdivision (3) of subsection 1 of section 173.1102;

(3) "Tuition", any tuition or incidental fee, or both, charged by an institution for attendance at the institution by a student as a resident of this state, but not to exceed the amount of tuition charged to a Missouri resident at the University of Missouri-Columbia for attendance.

3. A dependent of a veteran shall be eligible for a waiver of all tuition remaining due to an institution after subtracting awarded federal financial aid grants and state

18 scholarships and grants if the dependent meets the following
19 requirements:

20 (1) The dependent is a resident of this state who
21 meets the institution's requirements for establishing
22 Missouri residency for the purpose of paying in-state
23 tuition;

24 (2) The dependent has a parent, stepparent, or spouse
25 who is or was a member of the armed forces of the United
26 States who:

27 (a) Died while on active duty;

28 (b) Died of a service-connected disability;

29 (c) Died subsequent to discharge from the armed forces
30 as a result of injury or illness sustained while serving as
31 a member of the armed forces, whether or not the injury or
32 illness resulted in total disability;

33 (d) Is rated as permanently and totally disabled as a
34 result of military service as certified by the United States
35 Department of Veterans Affairs, excluding temporary total
36 disability ratings or other temporary disability ratings
37 given for conditions expected to improve, but including
38 ratings for total disability based on individual
39 unemployability if the unemployability is permanent; or

40 (e) Is classified as missing in action or as a
41 prisoner of war during armed hostilities while serving as a
42 member of the armed forces; and

43 (3) If the dependent is a child or stepchild of a
44 veteran described in subdivision (2) of this subsection,
45 such dependent shall be under twenty-six years of age,
46 unless the dependent serves on active duty with the armed
47 forces of the United States after such dependent's
48 eighteenth birthday but before such dependent's twenty-sixth
49 birthday, in which case the eligibility period shall end

50 five years after the date of the dependent's first discharge
51 or release from duty from the armed forces, but in no event
52 shall such eligibility period be extended beyond the
53 dependent's thirty-first birthday.

54 4. An application for a tuition waiver shall be
55 submitted on a form to be prescribed by the executive
56 director of the Missouri veterans commission. The executive
57 director shall ensure that the application process is
58 accessible, transparent, and efficiently administered.

59 5. The executive director of the Missouri veterans
60 commission or the executive director's designee shall:

61 (1) Establish application procedures by prescribing
62 and providing all necessary forms, setting application
63 deadlines, and determining required documentation for
64 dependents of disabled veterans to apply for the tuition
65 waiver;

66 (2) Review and determine applicant eligibility, verify
67 documentation, and certify approved applicants. Upon
68 certification, the executive director shall notify the
69 applicant and the institution in which the applicant desires
70 to enroll. The executive director's decision shall be final
71 and binding, absent fraud or misrepresentation;

72 (3) Promulgate necessary rules and regulations to
73 ensure effective administration of this section, including
74 procedures for eligibility verification, fraud prevention,
75 and program oversight;

76 (4) Coordinate with the board to facilitate
77 communication with institutions, ensure proper
78 implementation of waivers, and maintain program efficiency;
79 and

80 (5) Oversee program compliance and reporting by
81 maintaining records of waiver recipients, monitoring
82 participation, and providing periodic reports to the board.

83 6. The board shall:

84 (1) Ensure consistent implementation of this section
85 across all institutions, including institutional compliance
86 and reporting;

87 (2) Develop and distribute procedures and guidelines
88 for institutions to process tuition waivers, ensuring that
89 certified applicants are enrolled without tuition charges;
90 and

91 (3) Coordinate with the Missouri veterans commission
92 to ensure seamless communication between certifying
93 authorities and institutions, preventing administrative
94 delays for eligible applicants.

95 7. The waiver shall be valid for one degree, diploma,
96 or certificate from a community college and one
97 baccalaureate degree from a state college or university.
98 Receipt of such degree, diploma, or certificate from a
99 community college shall precede receipt of such
100 baccalaureate degree.

101 8. (1) A recipient of a tuition waiver pursuant to
102 this section shall be ineligible for any other state-funded
103 veteran-dependent tuition grant, waiver, or scholarship,
104 including, but not limited to, grants established in
105 sections 173.234 and 173.236.

106 (2) A student who has previously received any other
107 state-funded veteran-dependent tuition grant, waiver, or
108 scholarship, including, but not limited to, grants
109 established in sections 173.234 and 173.236, shall not be
110 eligible to receive a tuition waiver pursuant to this
111 section.

112 (3) A student shall not concurrently receive a tuition
113 waiver pursuant to this section and any other state-funded
114 veteran-dependent tuition grant, waiver, or scholarship,
115 including, but not limited to, grants established in
116 sections 173.234 and 173.236, but such student may elect to
117 use the program that provides the greatest financial benefit.

118 9. A recipient of a tuition waiver pursuant to this
119 section may transfer from one institution to another without
120 losing such recipient's entitlement to such tuition waiver.

121 10. If a recipient of a tuition waiver pursuant to
122 this section is granted financial assistance under any other
123 student aid program, whether public or private, the full
124 amount of such financial assistance shall be reported to the
125 Missouri veterans commission by the institution and the
126 recipient.

127 11. The Missouri veterans commission shall promulgate
128 all necessary rules for the implementation of the provisions
129 of this section. Any rule or portion of a rule, as that
130 term is defined in section 536.010, that is created under
131 the authority delegated in this section shall become
132 effective only if it complies with and is subject to all of
133 the provisions of chapter 536 and, if applicable, section
134 536.028. This section and chapter 536 are nonseverable and
135 if any of the powers vested with the general assembly
136 pursuant to chapter 536 to review, to delay the effective
137 date, or to disapprove and annul a rule are subsequently
138 held unconstitutional, then the grant of rulemaking
139 authority and any rule proposed or adopted after August 28,
140 2025, shall be invalid and void.

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