

SECOND REGULAR SESSION

HOUSE BILL NO. 2074

103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE PHELPS.

4849H.02I

JOSEPH ENGLER, Chief Clerk

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 scholarships and grants if the dependent meets the following requirements:

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

EXPLANATION — Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted from the law. Matter in **bold-face** type in the above bill is proposed language.

17 **(2) The dependent has a parent, step-parent, or spouse who is or was a member**
18 **of the Armed Forces of the United States and who:**

19 **(a) Died while on active duty;**

20 **(b) Died of a service-connected disability;**

21 **(c) Died subsequent to discharge from the Armed Forces of the United States as**
22 **a result of injury or illness sustained while serving as a member of the Armed Forces of**
23 **the United States, whether the injury or illness resulted in total disability;**

24 **(d) Is rated as permanently and totally disabled as a result of military service as**
25 **certified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, excluding temporary**
26 **total disability ratings or other temporary disability ratings given for conditions**
27 **expected to improve, but including ratings for total disability based on individual**
28 **unemployability if the unemployability is permanent; or**

29 **(e) Is classified as missing in action or as a prisoner of war during armed**
30 **hostilities while serving as a member of the Armed Forces of the United States; and**

31 **(3) If the dependent is a child or stepchild of a veteran described in subdivision**
32 **(2) of this subsection, such dependent shall be under twenty-six years of age unless the**
33 **dependent serves on active duty with the Armed Forces of the United States after such**
34 **dependent's eighteenth birthday but before such dependent's twenty-sixth birthday, in**
35 **which case the eligibility period shall end five years after the date of the dependent's**
36 **first discharge or release from duty from the Armed Forces of the United States, but in**
37 **no event shall such eligibility period be extended beyond the dependent's thirty-first**
38 **birthday.**

39 **4. An application for a tuition waiver shall be submitted on a form to be**
40 **prescribed by the executive director of the Missouri veterans' commission. The**
41 **executive director shall ensure that the application process is accessible, transparent,**
42 **and efficiently administered.**

43 **5. The executive director of the Missouri veterans' commission or the executive**
44 **director's designee shall:**

45 **(1) Establish application procedures by prescribing and providing all necessary**
46 **forms, setting application deadlines, and determining required documentation for**
47 **dependents of disabled veterans to apply for the tuition waiver;**

48 **(2) Review and determine applicant eligibility, verify documentation, and certify**
49 **approved applicants. Upon an applicant's certification, the executive director shall**
50 **notify the applicant and the institution in which the applicant desires to enroll. The**
51 **executive director's decision shall be final and binding, absent fraud or**
52 **misrepresentation;**

53 (3) Promulgate necessary rules and regulations to ensure effective
54 administration of this section, including procedures for eligibility verification, fraud
55 prevention, and program oversight;

56 (4) Coordinate with the board to facilitate communication with institutions,
57 ensure proper implementation of waivers, and maintain program efficiency; and

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

61 6. The board shall:

62 (1) Ensure consistent implementation of this section across all institutions,
63 including institutional compliance and reporting;

64 (2) Develop and distribute procedures and guidelines for institutions to process
65 tuition waivers, ensuring that certified applicants are enrolled without tuition charges;
66 and

67 (3) Coordinate with the Missouri veterans' commission to ensure seamless
68 communication between certifying authorities and institutions, preventing
69 administrative delays for eligible applicants.

70 7. The waiver shall be valid for one degree, diploma, or certificate from a
71 community college and one baccalaureate degree from a state college or university.
72 Receipt of such degree, diploma, or certificate from a community college shall precede
73 receipt of such baccalaureate degree.

74 8. (1) A recipient of a tuition waiver pursuant to this section shall be ineligible
75 for any other state-funded, veteran-dependent tuition grant, waiver, or scholarship
76 including, but not limited to, grants established in sections 173.234 and 173.236.

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

81 (3) A student shall not concurrently receive a tuition waiver pursuant to this
82 section and any other state-funded, veteran-dependent tuition grant, waiver, or
83 scholarship including, but not limited to, grants established in sections 173.234 and
84 173.236, but such student may elect to use the program that provides the greatest
85 financial benefit.

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

88 10. If a recipient of a tuition waiver pursuant to this section is granted financial
89 assistance under any other student aid program, whether public or private, the full

90 amount of such financial assistance shall be reported to the Missouri veterans'
91 commission by the institution and the recipient.

92 **11. The Missouri veterans' commission shall promulgate all necessary rules for**
93 **the implementation of the provisions of this section. Any rule or portion of a rule, as**
94 **that term is defined in section 536.010, that is created under the authority delegated in**
95 **this section shall become effective only if it complies with and is subject to all of the**
96 **provisions of chapter 536 and, if applicable, section 536.028. This section and chapter**
97 **536 are nonseverable and if any of the powers vested with the general assembly**
98 **pursuant to chapter 536 to review, to delay the effective date, or to disapprove and annul**
99 **a rule are subsequently held unconstitutional, then the grant of rulemaking authority**
100 **and any rule proposed or adopted after August 28, 2026, shall be invalid and void.**

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