

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to educational opportunities for children and spouses of deceased or disabled veterans and servicemembers; amending s. 295.01, F.S.; providing that it is the declared policy of the state to provide educational opportunity at state expense for spouses of deceased or disabled servicemembers; providing criteria for qualification for such benefits for unremarried spouses of deceased servicemembers and dependent spouses of disabled servicemembers; specifying uses of funds appropriated for such educational opportunities; amending s. 295.03, F.S., relating to withdrawal of benefits upon failure to comply with minimum educational requirements; revising terminology; amending s. 295.05, F.S., relating to enrollment as a prerequisite to receipt of benefits; revising terminology; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 295.01, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

295.01 Children of deceased or disabled veterans; spouses of deceased or disabled servicemembers; education.--

(1) It is hereby declared to be the policy of the state to provide educational opportunity at state expense for dependent children either of whose parents entered the Armed Forces and:

(a) Died as a result of service-connected injuries, disease, or disability sustained while on active duty; or

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29 (b) Has been:

30 1. Determined by the United States Department of Veterans
31 Affairs or its predecessor to have a service-connected 100-
32 percent total and permanent disability rating for compensation;

33 2. Determined to have a service-connected total and
34 permanent disability rating of 100 percent and is in receipt of
35 disability retirement pay from any branch of the United States
36 Armed Services; or

37 3. Issued a valid identification card by the Department of
38 Veterans' Affairs in accordance with s. 295.17,

39
40 when the parents of such children have been ~~bona-fide~~ residents
41 of the state for 1 year immediately preceding the death or
42 occurrence of such disability, and subject to the rules,
43 restrictions, and limitations set forth in this section.

44 (2) It is also the declared policy of the state to provide
45 educational opportunity at state expense for spouses of deceased
46 or disabled servicemembers.

47 (a) The unremarried spouse of a deceased servicemember, as
48 defined in s. 250.01, qualifies for the benefits under this
49 section:

50 1. If the servicemember and his or her spouse had been
51 residents of the state for 1 year immediately preceding the
52 servicemember's death and the servicemember's death occurred
53 under the circumstances provided in subsection (1); and

54 2. If the unremarried spouse applies to use the benefit
55 within 5 years after the servicemember's death.

56 (b) The dependent spouse of a disabled servicemember, as
 57 defined in s. 250.01, qualifies for the benefits under this
 58 section:

59 1. If the servicemember and his or her spouse have been
 60 married to each other for 1 year; and

61 2. If the servicemember and his or her spouse have been
 62 residents of the state for 1 year immediately preceding the
 63 occurrence of the servicemember's disability and the disability
 64 meets the criteria set forth in subsection (1); and

65 3. Only during the duration of the marriage and up to the
 66 point of termination of the marriage by dissolution or
 67 annulment.

68
 69 Notwithstanding s. 295.02, funds appropriated to carry out the
 70 provisions of this subsection may only be used for tuition and
 71 registration fees at state-supported institutions of higher
 72 learning, including community colleges and career centers. All
 73 rules, restrictions, and limitations set forth in this section
 74 shall apply.

75 (3)-(2) Sections 295.03, 295.04, 295.05, and 1009.40 shall
 76 apply.

77 (4)-(3) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules for
 78 administering this section.

79 Section 2. Section 295.03, Florida Statutes, is amended to
 80 read:

81 295.03 Minimum requirements.--Upon failure of any student
 82 ~~child~~ benefited by the provisions of this chapter to comply with
 83 the ordinary and minimum requirements of the institution

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84 attended, both as to discipline and scholarship, the benefits
85 thereof shall be withdrawn as to the student ~~child~~ and no
86 further moneys expended for his or her benefits so long as such
87 failure or delinquency continues.

88 Section 3. Section 295.05, Florida Statutes, is amended to
89 read:

90 295.05 Admission; enrollment.--Eligibility for admission
91 is not affected by this chapter, but all students ~~children~~
92 receiving benefits under this chapter shall be enrolled
93 according to the customary rules and requirements of the
94 institution attended.

95 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2006.