



104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

HB4729

by Rep. Gregg Johnson

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

New Act

Creates the Veterans' Dependents and Spouses College Tuition Waiver Act. Provides that an applicant is eligible for a waiver of tuition and mandatory fees at a public institution of higher education if the applicant is a spouse or dependent of an eligible veteran, is enrolled or accepted for enrollment at the public institution of higher education, and meets residency and enrollment requirements established by rule. Provides that the waiver applies only to tuition and mandatory fees and does not include room, board, books, supplies, or other nonmandatory expenses. Sets forth the length of the waiver. Provides that the Illinois Student Assistance Commission shall administer the waivers created by the Act. Provides that the Act's benefits shall be applied after federal educational benefits have been applied, unless otherwise provided by rule. Provides that nothing in the Act prohibits an applicant from receiving federal educational benefits, as long as there is no duplication of State-funded tuition assistance. Allows the Commission to adopt any rules necessary to implement and administer the Act. Effective July 1, 2026.

LRB104 17634 LNS 31065 b

STATE MANDATES
ACT MAY REQUIRE
REIMBURSEMENT

A BILL FOR

1 AN ACT concerning education.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the
5 Veterans' Dependents and Spouses College Tuition Waiver Act.

6 Section 5. Legislative findings and purpose.

7 (a) The General Assembly finds that:

8 (1) veterans and their families have made
9 extraordinary sacrifices in service to this State and the
10 United States;

11 (2) while this State provides tuition assistance
12 programs for veterans themselves, educational barriers
13 remain for the spouses and dependents of veterans,
14 particularly those affected by service-connected
15 disability or death; and

16 (3) access to affordable postsecondary education for
17 veterans' families strengthens this State's workforce,
18 economy, and communities.

19 (b) The purpose of this Act is to expand access to public
20 higher education by waiving tuition and mandatory fees for
21 eligible spouses and dependents of State veterans at public
22 institutions of higher education.

1 Section 10. Definitions. As used in this Act:

2 "Commission" means the Illinois Student Assistance
3 Commission.

4 "Dependent" means a child of an eligible veteran,
5 including a biological child, adopted child, or stepchild who
6 is claimed as a dependent for federal income tax purposes or
7 otherwise meets eligibility requirements established by rule.

8 "Eligible veteran" means a person who:

9 (1) served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the
10 United States;

11 (2) received an honorable discharge; and

12 (3) is or was, at the time of death, a resident of this
13 State as defined under rules adopted by the Commission.

14 "Eligible veteran" includes:

15 (A) a veteran who has a service-connected disability
16 rated at 30% or greater by the United States Department of
17 Veterans Affairs;

18 (B) a veteran who was killed in the line of duty;

19 (C) a veteran who died as a result of a
20 service-connected disability; or

21 (D) a veteran who is missing in action or classified
22 as a prisoner of war.

23 "Public institution of higher education" means a public
24 community college or public university in this State.

25 "Spouse" means a person legally married to an eligible
26 veteran.

1 "Tuition and mandatory fees" means charges assessed by a
2 public institution of higher education for enrollment,
3 instruction, and institution-wide fees required of all
4 students, excluding room, board, books, supplies, and
5 transportation.

6 Section 15. Eligibility for and award of waiver.

7 (a) An applicant is eligible for a waiver of tuition and
8 mandatory fees at a public institution of higher education
9 under this Act if the applicant:

10 (1) is a spouse or dependent of an eligible veteran;

11 (2) is enrolled or accepted for enrollment at the
12 public institution of higher education; and

13 (3) meets residency and enrollment requirements
14 established by rule.

15 (b) The Commission shall award waivers to eligible
16 applicants, and a public institution of higher education shall
17 waive tuition and mandatory fees for the recipient of a
18 particular waiver.

19 Section 20. Scope of benefit.

20 (a) A waiver awarded under this Act:

21 (1) applies only to tuition and mandatory fees; and

22 (2) does not include room, board, books, supplies, or
23 other nonmandatory expenses.

24 (b) The waiver is available for:

1 (1) up to the equivalent of 4 academic years of
2 full-time enrollment; or

3 (2) an equivalent amount of credit hours, as
4 determined by rule.

5 (c) The waiver may be used only for undergraduate
6 coursework, unless otherwise authorized by the General
7 Assembly.

8 Section 25. Administration.

9 (a) The Commission shall administer the waivers created by
10 this Act.

11 (b) The Commission shall:

12 (1) establish application procedures and verification
13 requirements;

14 (2) adopt rules to coordinate the waivers with other
15 State and federal educational benefits;

16 (3) ensure that recipients do not receive duplicative
17 State tuition benefits for the same academic term; and

18 (4) notify a public institution of higher education
19 that tuition and mandatory fees must be waived for the
20 recipient of a particular waiver.

21 Section 30. Coordination with other benefits.

22 (a) The benefits under this Act shall be applied after
23 federal educational benefits have been applied, unless
24 otherwise provided by rule.

1 (b) Nothing in this Act prohibits an applicant from
2 receiving federal educational benefits, including benefits
3 under federal veterans educational-assistance laws, as long as
4 there is no duplication of State-funded tuition assistance.

5 Section 90. Rulemaking. The Commission may adopt any rules
6 necessary to implement and administer this Act.

7 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon
8 becoming law.