

HOUSE BILL NO. 56
AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
(Proposed by the House Committee on Education
on _____)
(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Feggans)

A BILL to direct the Department of Veterans Services and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia to study the fiscal and administrative impact of expanding eligibility for the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program to include line of duty deaths; report.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

10 **1. § 1. The Department of Veterans Services (DVS), in coordination with the State Council of Higher**
11 **Education for Virginia (SCHEV) and each public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth,**
12 **shall conduct a study to evaluate the fiscal and administrative impact of expanding eligibility for tuition and**
13 **mandatory fee waivers under the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (the**
14 **Program) established pursuant to § 23.1-608 of the Code of Virginia to survivors and dependents of military**
15 **service members who died in the line of duty. In conducting such study, DVS and SCHEV shall:**

16 1. Estimate the number of additional survivors and dependents who would become eligible if line of duty
17 deaths were expressly included as a qualifying category under § 23.1-608 of the Code of Virginia;

18 2. Estimate the additional cost to public institutions of higher education associated with tuition and
19 mandatory fee waivers for such individuals, including a breakdown by institution where practicable;

3. Assess whether such additional cost would be absorbed by institutions or require additional state support;

22 4. Review eligibility verification standards and the role of federal certification in determining line of duty
23 deaths; and

24 5. Make recommendations regarding statutory changes, implementation timelines, or fiscal safeguards
25 should the General Assembly choose to expand eligibility to such survivors and dependents in a future
26 session.

27 *DVS and SCHEV shall report their findings and recommendations to the Chairs of the House Committee*
28 *on Appropriations, the House Committee on Education, the Senate Committee on Education and Health, and*
29 *the Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations no later than December 1, 2026.*