

Department of Planning and Budget
2026 General Assembly Session
State Fiscal Impact Statement

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ORIGINAL

Bill Number: SB92

Patron: Roem

Bill Title: Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program; tuition and fee waivers.

Bill Summary: Requires the Commissioner of Veterans Services to consider certain domicile or physical presence requirements for the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program satisfied when (i) the failure to meet such requirements is solely attributable to a relocation outside of the Commonwealth by lawful military order or (ii) in the case of a survivor or dependent that meets all other eligibility requirements who has relocated to the Commonwealth by lawful military order, when the survivor or dependent has established residency in the Commonwealth, after having been enrolled in a higher education tuition and fees program for military survivors and dependents in another state.

Budget Amendment Necessary: No

Items Impacted: None

Explanation: See below

Fiscal Summary: This proposal requires the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services to consider certain domicile or physical presence requirements for the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program, which could expand the number of participants in the program.

Fiscal Analysis: Institutions of higher education are required to waive tuition and fees for individuals who qualify for this program. These waivers result in a loss of revenue for the institution. This legislation would possibly expand program eligibility by allowing the Commissioner to consider additional factors, which may result in additional revenue loss for institutions of higher education. At this time, there is not sufficient information to determine how many individuals may meet these expanded criteria, nor to estimate how many of those individuals may take advantage of the waiver. If additional information becomes available, this fiscal impact statement will be updated.

Since FY 2021, the cost of waivers under this program has increased from \$31 million to a projected \$150 million in FY 2026. The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) projects that, under existing criteria, the cost of waivers under this program may increase to almost \$200 million by FY 2028. Since FY 2025, the state has provided general fund appropriation to offset a portion of the impact of this program and other waiver programs under § 23.1, Chapter 6, Code of Virginia. Item 131 of HB/SB 30 proposes \$85.0 million general fund and \$75.0 million from nongeneral funds each year to offset the cost of waiver programs under § 23.1, Chapter 6, Code of Virginia. Any expansion of waiver programs may widen the gap between state support and the amount that institutions must absorb from this revenue loss.

The Department of Veterans Services does not anticipate a fiscal impact on the agency as result of this proposal.

Other: None.