

KANSAS OFFICE *of*
REVISOR *of* STATUTES

LEGISLATURE *of* THE STATE *of* KANSAS
Legislative Attorneys transforming ideas into legislation.

300 SW TENTH AVENUE ■ SUITE 24-E ■ TOPEKA, KS 66612 ■ (785) 296-2321

MEMORANDUM

To: Chairman Billinger and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee

From: Jill A. Wolters, First Assistant Revisor

Date: March 23, 2021

Subject: **SubHB2094**, Expanding educational benefits of tuition and fees waiver for spouses and dependents of public safety officers and personnel who are injured or disabled while performing service-related duties

Substitute for House Bill No. 2094 expands the educational benefits of tuition and fees waiver for spouses and dependents of public safety officers and personnel who are injured or disabled while performing service-related duties.

House Bill No. 2094, as introduced, established the wartime veteran and first responder survivors' grant fund in the state treasury and administered by the state board of regents. All expenditures from the fund shall be used for educational grants to the survivors of wartime veterans and first responders. The bill established the wartime veteran and first responder survivors' grant program to provide for tuition, fees and books at a Kansas postsecondary educational institution. HB2094 is identical, except for the rules and regulations date, to 2020 HB 2731, which was referred to House Appropriations, but did not have a hearing prior to the Legislature recessing early in 2020 due to the pandemic.

House Appropriations Committee amended the bill by expanding a current educational benefit program, K.S.A. 75-4364. Currently, this program allows: 1) A dependent or spouse of a deceased public safety officer (defined as a law enforcement officer, firefighter or emergency medical service provider), who died as the result of an injury sustained while performing the duties as such an officer; 2) a dependent or spouse of a deceased military service member who died, on or after 9/11/2001, as the result of serving in military service; or any prisoner of war, to enroll in a Kansas educational institution (defined as community colleges, the municipal university, state educational institutions, the institute of technology at Washburn university and technical colleges) without being charged tuition or fees. The Kansas educational institution may file a claim with the board of regents for reimbursement for such tuition and fees. The board of regents is to include in it's annual budget estimates a request for an appropriation to cover the tuition and fee claims.

The House amendment expands who is eligible to receive no cost tuition and fees under this program to include a dependent or spouse of an injured or disabled public safety

officer or military service member or a dependent or spouse of a military service member who has at least a 80% service-connected disability as a result of injuries sustained in combat after 9/11/2001. The bill expands the definition of a “public safety officer” to include any employee of a law enforcement office, sheriff’s department, municipal fire department, volunteer and non-volunteer fire protection association, emergency medical services provider or correctional institution of the department of corrections. Finally, the bill limits the amount of reimbursement to Kansas educational institutions to a total of \$350,000 in any fiscal year.

The bill becomes effective upon the publication in the statute book.

The substitute bill passed the House on March 17, 2021, by a vote of 117 to 6.