



Senate Fiscal Agency
P. O. Box 30036
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536

BILL



ANALYSIS

Telephone: (517) 373-5383
Fax: (517) 373-1986

House Bill 5873 (Substitute H-3 as reported without amendment)

Sponsor: Representative Anthony Forlini

House Committee: Appropriations

Senate Committee: Appropriations

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Police Officer's and Fire Fighter's Survivor Tuition Act, which provides for the waiver of tuition at Michigan public community colleges and universities for the surviving spouse and children of Michigan police officers and firefighters killed in the line of duty. To be eligible, an applicant must:

- Apply, qualify, and enroll in a program leading to a certificate or degree.
- Be a Michigan resident for 12 consecutive months preceding application.
- Provide satisfactory evidence that the applicant is an eligible child (an individual who was under the age of 21 at the time of the police officer's or firefighter's death) or surviving spouse of a police officer or firefighter killed in the line of duty.
- If the student is a child of the deceased police officer or firefighter, apply for a tuition waiver the first time before the age of 21.
- Be certified by the public institution's financial aid officer as needing the waiver to meet tuition expenses, with family income demonstrating financial need.
- For renewal, meet the institution's satisfactory academic progress policy.
- Have not yet received a bachelor's degree and have received reimbursements for fewer than 124 semester credits or 180 term credits at an institution of higher education.

The bill would do the following:

- Move the administrative responsibility of the program from the Department of State Police to the Department of Treasury. (The Department of Treasury began administering this program in FY 2010-11. Grant funds are appropriated in the Higher Education budget.)
- Raise the age by which an eligible child must first apply for a survivor's tuition grant from 21 to 26.
- Remove references to "waiver" and replace them with "grant", and require the grant to be used by the institution of higher education only for the student's outstanding indebtedness for eligible tuition.
- Add certain definitions to the Act and delineate the application process and administration of the program consistent with the current process.

MCL 390.1241 - 390.1245

FISCAL IMPACT

Changing the age by which an eligible child must first apply for the program from 21 to 26 would result in an indeterminate cost increase. Other changes in the bill relate to the FY 2010-11 transfer of the program from the Department of State Police to the Department of Treasury and would have no fiscal impact. The following table provides information on the number of students qualifying for tuition waivers and the cost to the State for FY 2006-07 through FY 2011-12.

Police Officer's and Fire Fighter's Survivor Tuition Program		
Fiscal Year	Applications Approved	Total Cost
FY 2006-07	6	\$18,324
FY 2007-08	5	19,985
FY 2008-09	5	23,775
FY 2009-10	3	30,893
FY 2010-11	5	38,811
FY 2011-12	6	54,454

Source: FY 2010-11 and FY 2011-12 Department of Treasury and FY 2006-07 through FY 2009-10 Department of State Police.

Date Completed: 11-28-12

Fiscal Analyst: Bill Bowerman

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.