

HOUSE BILL No. 2731

By Committee on Appropriations

2-26

1 AN ACT establishing the wartime veteran and first responder survivors'
2 grant program and fund; relating to the state board of regents; Kansas
3 commission on veterans affairs office.
4

5 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Kansas:*

6 Section 1. (a) There is hereby established in the state treasury the
7 wartime veteran and first responder survivors' grant fund. The fund shall
8 be administered by the state board of regents. All expenditures from the
9 fund shall be for the purpose of providing educational grants to the
10 survivors of wartime veterans and first responders and be made in
11 accordance with appropriation acts upon warrants of the director of
12 accounts and reports issued pursuant to vouchers approved by the state
13 board or the state board's designee.

14 (b) On June 30 of each year, the director of accounts and reports shall
15 determine if there is an unencumbered balance in the wartime veteran and
16 first responder survivors' grant fund in excess of \$350,000. The director of
17 accounts and reports shall certify the amount of such excess
18 unencumbered balance, if any, to the director of the budget and the director
19 of legislative research and transfer such amount, if any, from such fund to
20 the state general fund.

21 (c) There is hereby established the wartime veteran and first
22 responder survivors' grant program. Subject to appropriations, the number
23 of grants awarded and the amount of grants awarded shall be determined
24 by the board. A grant awarded under the program shall provide for
25 payment to a survivor in an amount not to exceed the amount of tuition,
26 fees and books for an academic year at the Kansas postsecondary
27 educational institution in which the survivor is enrolled. The total number
28 of grants awarded per academic year shall not exceed 30.

29 (d) (1) To be eligible for a wartime veteran and first responder
30 survivors' grant, a survivor shall:

31 (A) Be a survivor certified by the Kansas commission on veterans
32 affairs office;

33 (B) have been accepted for admission to or be enrolled in a course of
34 instruction in a Kansas postsecondary educational institution; and

35 (C) complete the required grant application on a form and in a
36 manner prescribed by the board.

1 (2) A survivor who has previously received a grant under this section
2 may be eligible for renewal of the grant, if the survivor remains in good
3 standing and is making satisfactory progress toward completion of the
4 requirements of the course of instruction in which the survivor is enrolled.

5 (3) A survivor who has previously completed a baccalaureate degree
6 shall not eligible to receive a grant under this section.

7 (f) On or before March 1, 2021, in consultation with the Kansas
8 commission on veterans affairs office, the state board of regents shall
9 adopt rules and regulations to implement and administer the wartime
10 veteran and first responder survivors' grant program. Such rules and
11 regulations shall establish:

12 (1) The form and manner of the grant application;

13 (2) grant application deadlines;

14 (3) procedures for the Kansas commission on veterans affairs office
15 to certify the survivor's eligibility; and

16 (4) other rules and regulations as necessary for the administration of
17 this section.

18 (g) As used in this section:

19 (1) "Postsecondary educational institution" means the same as
20 defined in K.S.A. 74-3201b, and amendments thereto.

21 (2) "Qualifying first responder" means an employee of any law
22 enforcement office, sheriff's department, municipal fire department,
23 volunteer and non-volunteer fire protection association or emergency
24 medical services provider, who was employed after September 11, 2001,
25 and:

26 (A) Was killed in the discharge of such first responder's duties;

27 (B) dies from the effects of injuries received or disease contracted by
28 reason of the discharge of such first responder's duties; or

29 (C) was injured or disabled in or by reason of the discharge of such
30 first responder's duties.

31 (3) "Qualifying wartime veteran" means any member of the armed
32 forces of the United States who served in the military after September 11,
33 2001, during time of war and was a Kansas resident when first entering
34 military service or at time of death or injury, and:

35 (A) Was killed or disabled as a result of combat action;

36 (B) is certified by the department of veterans affairs medical authority
37 to have died or sustained an injury attributable to an illness or accident
38 occurred while serving in combat; or

39 (C) is entitled to compensation for a service-connected disability of at
40 least 80% because of a public statute administered by the department of
41 veterans affairs or a military department as a result of injuries or accidents
42 sustained in combat after September 11, 2001.

43 (4) "Survivor" means:

1 (A) A natural, adopted or stepchild of a qualifying wartime veteran or
2 qualifying first responder, who is less than 25 years of age and was a
3 dependent of such veteran or first responder at the time of death or injury
4 or within five years after the injury; or

5 (B) the spouse of a qualifying wartime veteran or qualifying first
6 responder, who was married to such veteran or first responder at the time
7 of the death or injury or within five years after the injury.

8 Sec. 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its
9 publication in the statute book.