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MEMORANDUM

To: Senate Committee on Education
From: Kansas Office of Revisor of Statutes
Date: March 6, 2024
Subject: HB 2646—Kansas Hero’s Scholarship Act

House Bill 2646 would amend the Kansas Hero’s Scholarship Act in K.S.A. 75-4364 to clarify eligibility for military servicemember recipients of financial assistance and modify the maximum limitation for reimbursements to postsecondary educational institutions who provide financial assistance in accordance with the act.

Recipient Eligibility

Currently, the act requires certain postsecondary educational institutions to waive charges for tuition and fees for up to 10 semesters for the following individuals:

- Dependents and spouses of any public safety officer who was injured, disabled or who died while performing their duties as a public safety officer. “Public safety officer” includes any employee of a law enforcement office, sheriff’s department, municipal fire department, fire protection association, emergency medical services provider or correctional institution;
- Dependents and spouses of any military service member who was injured, disabled or who died after September 11, 2001, as a result of serving in military service;
- Dependents and spouses of any military service member entitled to compensation for a service-connected disability of at least 80% for injuries sustained after September 11, 2001; and
- Any prisoner of war.

HB 2646 would clarify military servicemember eligibility. Specifically, the bill would remove the requirement that a servicemember’s injury, disability or death occurred after September 11, 2001, so that any spouse or dependent of a military servicemember who suffered

injury, disability or death at any time would qualify for the program. Additionally, the bill would amend the language to clarify that any such death would have to have occurred “while serving in military service” instead of “as a result” of military service. The bill would also specify that the eligible servicemember’s injury or disability would have to have rendered the servicemember incapable of continuing military service or is entitled to department of veterans affairs benefits for a service-connected disability of at least 80%.

Maximum Reimbursement

Additionally, there is currently a \$500,000 total maximum to postsecondary educational institutions for reimbursements of any tuition and fees waived under this act. HB 2646 would strike the maximum limitation so that reimbursement would be allowed up to the aggregate limit established by the state board of regents based on annual appropriations.

Effective Date

HB 2646 would take effect upon publication in the Kansas Register.