

House File 2654 - Introduced

HOUSE FILE 2654
BY COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

(SUCCESSOR TO HSB 716)

A BILL FOR

1 An Act providing for a waiver of resident tuition at community
2 colleges for dependents of first responders.
3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

unofficial

1 Section 1. NEW SECTION. **261M.1 Short title.**

2 This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "First
3 Responder Dependent Education Act".

4 Sec. 2. NEW SECTION. **261M.2 Definitions.**

5 1. "Associate degree program" means a degree program offered
6 by a community college that requires completion of at least
7 sixty semester credit hours or an equivalent program of study.
8 "Associate degree program" does not include a baccalaureate
9 degree program.

10 2. "Dependent" means a child of a first responder who is
11 claimed as a dependent for state or federal tax purposes for the
12 most recent tax year.

13 3. "Emergency medical care provider" means an individual
14 certified pursuant to section 147A.6.

15 4. "Employ" or "employment" includes work as a volunteer.

16 5. "Fire fighter" means a paid or volunteer member of a fire
17 department who is certified under section 100B.6.

18 6. "First responder" means a law enforcement officer, fire
19 fighter, or emergency medical care provider.

20 7. "Law enforcement officer" means a person who is
21 responsible for the prevention or detection of crime or the
22 enforcement of the criminal, traffic, or highway laws of this
23 state or any political subdivision of this state for more than
24 one hundred hours per year, and who is authorized by law to make
25 arrests.

26 Sec. 3. NEW SECTION. **261M.3 Eligibility for tuition
27 waiver.**

28 A community college shall grant a dependent of a first
29 responder a waiver of resident tuition if the dependent does all
30 of the following:

31 1. Meets all admission requirements of the community college.

32 2. Enrolls in the community college and pursues studies
33 leading to any of the following:

34 a. An associate degree related to a career in public safety
35 or emergency response.

1 b. A degree or credential in a high-demand job as determined
2 by the workforce development board pursuant to section 84A.1B,
3 subsection 3.

4 3. Submits verification that the dependent's parent or legal
5 guardian was employed for at least six years as a first responder
6 and at the time of the dependent's initial application for
7 a waiver is either an active first responder in Iowa or is
8 retired. Verification must include a certificate of satisfactory
9 performance from a supervisor within the agency that employs
10 or most recently employed the first responder. Employment by
11 multiple employers or in multiple first responder occupations
12 shall be counted for purposes of the six-year period.

13 Sec. 4. NEW SECTION. **261M.4 Waiver amount and duration.**

14 1. The amount of a waiver under this chapter shall be
15 the amount of the dependent's resident tuition remaining after
16 subtracting all of the following received by the dependent:

17 a. Any federal grants.

18 b. Any state scholarships and grants.

19 c. Any awards from the future ready Iowa skilled workforce
20 last-dollar scholarship program under section 256.228.

21 2. An eligible dependent may receive the tuition waiver for
22 no more than two academic years, provided the dependent continues
23 to meet the requirements of this chapter and all policies of
24 the community college on continued enrollment and progress toward
25 completion of the applicable degree or program.

26 Sec. 5. NEW SECTION. **261M.5 In-state residency**
27 **requirement.**

28 1. As a condition of receiving a tuition waiver under this
29 chapter, a dependent shall remain a resident of the state of Iowa
30 for a period of not less than five years following completion of
31 the degree or program for which the waiver was received.

32 2. A dependent who voluntarily relocates outside the state
33 before completing the required five-year period shall repay to
34 the community college the prorated amount of tuition waived on
35 the dependent's behalf. The community college shall determine

1 the prorated repayment amount based on the portion of the
2 five-year residency obligation not completed.

3 3. Repayment under this section shall not be required if the
4 dependent's relocation is due to death, permanent disability, or
5 other good cause as determined by the community college.

6 4. If a first responder dies in the line of duty after the
7 dependent's initial application for a waiver is submitted, the
8 dependent shall remain eligible for the tuition waiver and shall
9 not be subject to subsection 1.

10 5. A community college shall adopt procedures for monitoring
11 compliance with this section and for administering repayment
12 obligations.

13 Sec. 6. IMPLEMENTATION OF ACT. Section 25B.2, subsection 3,
14 shall not apply to this Act.

15 EXPLANATION

16 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with
17 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

18 This bill provides for a waiver of resident tuition at
19 community colleges for dependents of first responders. The
20 bill defines first responder as a law enforcement officer, fire
21 fighter, or emergency medical care provider.

22 The bill requires a community college to grant a dependent of
23 a first responder a waiver of resident tuition if the dependent
24 meets admission requirements, enrolls in the community college
25 and pursues studies leading to a specified degree or credential,
26 and submits verification that the dependent's parent or legal
27 guardian was employed for at least six years as a first responder
28 and is either an active first responder in Iowa or is retired at
29 the time of the dependent's initial application for a waiver.

30 The amount of a waiver under the bill is the amount of
31 the dependent's resident tuition remaining after subtracting
32 federal grants, state scholarships and grants, and awards from
33 the future ready Iowa skilled workforce last-dollar scholarship
34 program received by the dependent. The bill provides that an
35 eligible dependent may receive the tuition waiver for no more

1 than two academic years, provided the dependent continues to meet
2 the requirements of the bill and all policies of the community
3 college on continued enrollment and progress toward completion of
4 the applicable degree or program.

5 As a condition of receiving a tuition waiver, the bill
6 requires the dependent to remain a resident of Iowa for a period
7 of not less than five years following completion of the degree
8 or program for which the waiver was received. The bill provides
9 for repayment to a community college of the amount waived if
10 a dependent voluntarily relocates outside the state and for
11 exceptions to the repayment requirement.

12 The bill may include a state mandate as defined in Code
13 section 25B.3. The bill makes inapplicable Code section 25B.2,
14 subsection 3, which would relieve a political subdivision from
15 complying with a state mandate if funding for the cost of the
16 state mandate is not provided or specified. Therefore, political
17 subdivisions are required to comply with any state mandate
18 included in the bill.