

SENATE
STATE OF MINNESOTA
NINETY-FOURTH SESSION

S.F. No. 3957

(SENATE AUTHORS: SEEBERGER, Hoffman and Duckworth)

DATE	D-PG	OFFICIAL STATUS
02/26/2026	6412	Introduction and first reading Referred to Agriculture, Veterans, Broadband, and Rural Development
03/12/2026	6675	Author added Duckworth
03/17/2026	6684	Comm report: To pass
	6734	Second reading
03/26/2026	7047	Referred to for comparison with HF3741 Rule 45; subst. General Orders HF3741, SF indefinitely postponed

1.1 A bill for an act

1.2 relating to veterans; modifying educational assistance for veterans' children and

1.3 spouses; appropriating money; amending Minnesota Statutes 2024, sections 197.75,

1.4 subdivisions 2, 3, 5, by adding a subdivision; 197.791, subdivision 8; Minnesota

1.5 Statutes 2025 Supplement, section 197.75, subdivision 1; repealing Minnesota

1.6 Statutes 2024, section 197.752.

1.7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.8 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2025 Supplement, section 197.75, subdivision 1, is amended

1.9 to read:

1.10 Subdivision 1. **Definitions.** (a) The definitions in this subdivision apply to this section.

1.11 (b) "Commissioner" means the commissioner of veterans affairs.

1.12 (c) "Deceased veteran" means a veteran who has died as a result of the person's military

1.13 service, as determined by the United States Department of Veterans Administration, and

1.14 ~~who was a resident of this state: (1) within six months of entering the United States armed~~

1.15 ~~forces, or (2) for the six months preceding the veteran's date of death~~ Affairs or United

1.16 States Department of Defense.

1.17 (d) "Eligible child" means a person who:

1.18 (1) is the natural or adopted child or stepchild of:

1.19 (i) a deceased veteran; and or

1.20 (ii) a person who served as a prisoner of war or was declared a person missing in action,

1.21 if the child was born or legally adopted by the person or was in the legal custody of the

2.1 person before or during the period that the person served as a prisoner of war or was declared
 2.2 a person missing in action;

2.3 (2) is a student making satisfactory academic progress at an eligible institution of higher
 2.4 education;

2.5 (3) is a resident student, as defined in section 136A.101, subdivision 8; and

2.6 (4) has applied for educational assistance under this section before the end of the academic
 2.7 term for which the assistance is being requested.

2.8 (e) "Eligible institution" means a postsecondary educational institution located in this
 2.9 state that either is operated by this state or, the Board of Regents of the University of
 2.10 Minnesota, or a Tribally controlled college or is licensed or registered with the Office of
 2.11 Higher Education.

2.12 (f) "Eligible spouse" means a person who:

2.13 (1) is the spouse or surviving spouse of:

2.14 (i) a deceased veteran, regardless of whether the surviving spouse remarries; or

2.15 (ii) a person who served as a prisoner of war or was declared a person missing in action;

2.16 (2) is a student making satisfactory academic progress at an eligible institution of higher
 2.17 education;

2.18 (3) is a resident student, as defined in section 136A.101, subdivision 8; and

2.19 (4) has applied for educational assistance under this section before the end of the academic
 2.20 term for which the assistance is being requested.

2.21 ~~(g) "Eligible veteran" means a veteran who:~~

2.22 ~~(1) is a student making satisfactory academic progress at an eligible institution of higher~~
 2.23 ~~education;~~

2.24 ~~(2) had Minnesota as the person's state of residence at the time of the person's enlistment~~
 2.25 ~~or any reenlistment into the United States armed forces, as shown by the person's federal~~
 2.26 ~~form DD-214 or other official documentation to the satisfaction of the commissioner;~~

2.27 ~~(3) except for benefits under this section, has no remaining military or veteran-related~~
 2.28 ~~educational assistance benefits for which the person may have been entitled; and~~

2.29 ~~(4) while using the educational assistance authorized in this section, remains a resident~~
 2.30 ~~student as defined in section 136A.101, subdivision 8.~~

3.1 (g) "Prisoner of war" and "person missing in action" mean any person who, while serving
 3.2 in the United States armed forces, has been declared to be a prisoner of war or to be a person
 3.3 missing in action as established by the Secretary of Defense after August 1, 1958.

3.4 (h) "Public postsecondary educational institution" means an institution operated by the
 3.5 state or the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota.

3.6 ~~(h)~~ (i) "Satisfactory academic progress" has the meaning given in section 136A.101,
 3.7 subdivision 10.

3.8 ~~(i)~~ (j) "Student" has the meaning given in section 136A.101, subdivision 7.

3.9 (k) "Surviving spouse" means a person who was legally married, as recognized by the
 3.10 state of Minnesota, to a veteran at the time of the veteran's death.

3.11 (l) "Tribally controlled college" has the meaning given in section 136A.1796, subdivision
 3.12 1, paragraph (d).

3.13 (m) "Tuition and fees" means the tuition and fees charged by an institution.

3.14 ~~(j)~~ (n) "Veteran" has the meaning given in section 197.447.

3.15 Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 197.75, subdivision 2, is amended to read:

3.16 Subd. 2. **Benefits; eligibility.** (a) The commissioner of veterans affairs ~~shall~~ must spend
 3.17 a biennial appropriation to provide an educational assistance stipend of \$750 each year for
 3.18 each eligible child and each eligible spouse, ~~and a single payment of \$750 for each eligible~~
 3.19 ~~veteran. This~~ The stipend under this subdivision is not available for any person who has
 3.20 attained a bachelor's or equivalent degree.

3.21 (b) Each eligible child and each eligible spouse ~~shall~~ must be admitted to any eligible
 3.22 Minnesota public eligible postsecondary educational institution free of tuition and fees until
 3.23 the person has attained a bachelor's or equivalent degree.

3.24 (c) After the commissioner approves of an applicant's eligibility for educational assistance,
 3.25 the applicant must be awarded a financial stipend on a funds-available basis. Payments of
 3.26 benefits authorized under this section ~~shall~~ must be made directly to the participating eligible
 3.27 institutions or to eligible individuals, as determined by the commissioner.

3.28 (d) Once a person qualifies as an eligible child under subdivision 1, paragraph (d), the
 3.29 person remains an eligible child, regardless of any change in circumstance, including:

3.30 (1) the return of the person's parent who was a prisoner of war or person missing in
 3.31 action; or

4.1 (2) the reported death of the person's parent who was a prisoner of war or person missing
 4.2 in action.

4.3 (e) Once a person qualifies as an eligible spouse under subdivision 1, paragraph (f), the
 4.4 person remains an eligible spouse, regardless of any change in circumstance, including:

4.5 (1) the return of the person's spouse who was a prisoner of war or person missing in
 4.6 action; or

4.7 (2) the reported death of the person's spouse who was a prisoner of war or person missing
 4.8 in action.

4.9 Sec. 3. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 197.75, subdivision 3, is amended to read:

4.10 Subd. 3. **Proof of eligibility.** A person seeking approval for benefits under this section
 4.11 ~~shall require submission of~~ must submit the following evidence: an application, proof of
 4.12 military service, and, where if applicable, proof of residency and a statement from the United
 4.13 ~~States Veterans Administration that the veteran has exhausted entitlement to federal~~
 4.14 ~~educational benefits through use thereof,~~ proof of service-connected disability, or that proof
 4.15 that the veteran died of service-connected disabilities as a result of the veteran's military
 4.16 service as determined by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or United States
 4.17 Department of Defense. Upon submission of satisfactory proof of eligibility, benefits ~~shall~~
 4.18 must be provided from the date of application and notification of approval ~~shall~~ must be
 4.19 sent to the educational institution and applicant.

4.20 Sec. 4. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 197.75, subdivision 5, is amended to read:

4.21 Subd. 5. **Participation by eligible institutions.** (a) Each Minnesota public postsecondary
 4.22 educational institution must continue to participate in the educational assistance program
 4.23 authorized in this section during both peacetime and times of war.

4.24 (b) Any participating eligible institution not described in paragraph (a) may suspend or
 4.25 terminate its participation in the program at the end of any academic semester or other
 4.26 academic term.

4.27 Sec. 5. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 197.75, is amended by adding a subdivision to
 4.28 read:

4.29 Subd. 7. **Reports.** (a) An eligible institution must submit an annual report by September
 4.30 30 each year to the commissioner that describes:

5.1 (1) program activity and the number of students that the institution served under this
5.2 section;

5.3 (2) enrollment and graduation data for all students awarded education benefits under
5.4 this section; and

5.5 (3) the aggregate cost of tuition and awarded tuition waivers for students who received
5.6 benefits under this section.

5.7 (b) A public or regionally accredited private postsecondary educational institution must
5.8 provide information to eligible children and spouses according to this section and other
5.9 information and links that are useful to students and parents who are in the process of
5.10 selecting a college or university and on the institution's website by providing a veterans
5.11 education benefits page with links to the federal and state veterans education benefits
5.12 programs.

5.13 Sec. 6. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 197.791, subdivision 8, is amended to read:

5.14 Subd. 8. **Appropriation.** The amount necessary to pay the benefit amounts in subdivisions
5.15 5, ~~5a, and 5b~~ 6, and 7, and section 197.75 is appropriated from the general fund to the
5.16 commissioner. During any fiscal year beginning on or after July 1, 2012, the amount paid
5.17 under this subdivision must not exceed \$6,000,000.

5.18 Sec. 7. **REPEALER.**

5.19 Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 197.752, is repealed.

197.752 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO POW/MIA DEPENDENTS.

Any dependent of a prisoner of war or a person missing in action, upon being duly accepted for enrollment in any Minnesota public postsecondary institution, shall be allowed to attend the institution to obtain a bachelor's degree or certificate of completion, while eligible, free of tuition or charge. A dependent who enrolls as an undergraduate in any private Minnesota postsecondary institution shall be entitled to payment by the state of tuition and fees at a rate not to exceed \$250 per year for so long as the dependent is eligible to attend the institution and is working toward a bachelor's degree or certificate of completion.

"Prisoner of war" and "persons missing in action" for purposes of this section mean any person who was a resident of the state at the time the person entered service of the United States armed forces, or whose official residence is within the state, and who, while serving in the United States armed forces has been declared to be a prisoner of war, or to be a person missing in action as established by the Secretary of Defense after August 1, 1958.

"Dependent" for purposes of this section means the spouse of a prisoner of war or person missing in action, or any child born before or during the period of time the child's parent served as a prisoner of war or was declared a person missing in action, or any child legally adopted or in the legal custody of the parent prior to and during the time the parent served as a prisoner of war or was declared to be a person missing in action. Once a person qualifies as a dependent under the terms and provisions of this section there shall be no situation such as the return of the spouse or parent or the reported death of the spouse or parent that will remove the dependent from provisions or benefits of this section.