

CHAPTER 156--S.F.No. 3461

An act relating to military veterans; recodifying certain GI Bill statutory language; making technical changes; amending Minnesota Statutes 2016, section 197.791, subdivision 6, by adding a subdivision; Minnesota Statutes 2017 Supplement, section 197.791, subdivisions 3, 5.

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

Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2017 Supplement, section 197.791, subdivision 3, is amended to read:

Subd. 3. **Duties; responsibilities.** (a) The commissioner shall establish policies and procedures including, but not limited to, procedures for student application record keeping, information sharing, payment of educational assistance benefits under subdivision 5, payment of apprenticeship or on-the-job training benefits under subdivision 5a, payment of other educational or professional benefits under subdivision ~~5~~ 5b, and other procedures the commissioner considers appropriate and necessary for effective and efficient administration of the program established in this section.

(b) The commissioner may delegate part or all of the administrative procedures for the program to responsible representatives of participating eligible institutions. The commissioner may execute an interagency agreement with the Minnesota Office of Higher Education for services the commissioner determines necessary to administer the program.

Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2017 Supplement, section 197.791, subdivision 5, is amended to read:

Subd. 5. **Educational assistance amount.** (a) On approval by the commissioner of eligibility for the program, the applicant shall be awarded, on a funds-available basis, the educational assistance under the program for use at any time according to program rules at any eligible institution.

(b) The amount of educational assistance in any semester or term for an eligible person must be determined by subtracting from the eligible person's cost of attendance the amount the person received or was eligible to receive in that semester or term from:

- (1) the federal Pell Grant;
- (2) the state grant program under section 136A.121; and

(3) any federal military or veterans educational benefits including but not limited to the Montgomery GI Bill, GI Bill Kicker, the federal tuition assistance program, vocational rehabilitation benefits, and any other federal benefits associated with the person's status as a veteran, except veterans disability payments from the United States Veterans Administration and payments made under the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP).

(c) The amount of educational assistance for any eligible person who is a full-time student must not exceed the following:

- (1) \$3,000 per state fiscal year; and
- (2) \$10,000 in a lifetime.

~~(d) A person eligible under this subdivision may use the benefit amounts for the following purposes:~~

~~(1) licensing or certification tests, the successful completion of which demonstrates an individual's possession of the knowledge or skill required to enter into, maintain, or advance in employment in a~~

~~predetermined and identified vocation or profession, provided that the tests and the licensing or credentialing organizations or entities that offer the tests are approved by the commissioner;~~

~~(2) tests for admission to institutions of higher learning or graduate schools;~~

~~(3) national tests providing an opportunity for course credit at institutions of higher learning;~~

~~(4) a preparatory course for a test that is required or used for admission to an institution of higher education or a graduate program; and~~

~~(5) any fee associated with the pursuit of a professional or educational objective specified in clauses (1) to (4).~~

~~(e) If an eligible person receives benefits under subdivision 5, the eligible person's aggregate benefits under this subdivision and subdivision 5 must not exceed \$10,000 in the eligible person's lifetime.~~

~~(f) If an eligible person receives benefits under subdivision 5a, the eligible person's aggregate benefits under this subdivision and subdivision 5a must not exceed \$10,000 in the eligible person's lifetime.~~

~~(d) For a part-time student, the amount of educational assistance must not exceed \$500 per semester or term of enrollment. For the purpose of this paragraph, a part-time undergraduate student is a student taking fewer than 12 credits or the equivalent for a semester or term of enrollment and a part-time graduate student is a student considered part time by the eligible institution the graduate student is attending. The minimum award for undergraduate and graduate students is \$50 per term.~~

Sec. 3. Minnesota Statutes 2016, section 197.791, is amended by adding a subdivision to read:

Subd. 5b. **Additional professional or educational benefits.** (a) The commissioner shall develop and implement a program to administer a portion of the Minnesota GI Bill program to pay additional benefit amounts to eligible persons as provided under this subdivision.

(b) A person is eligible for additional benefits under this subdivision if the person meets the criteria established under subdivision 4, paragraph (a), clause (1). The commissioner may determine eligibility as provided in subdivision 4, paragraph (c), and may deny or terminate benefits as prescribed under subdivision 4, paragraphs (d) and (e). The amount of assistance paid to or on behalf of an eligible individual under this subdivision must not exceed the following amounts:

(1) \$3,000 per state fiscal year; and

(2) \$10,000 in a lifetime.

(c) A person eligible under this subdivision may use the benefit amounts for the following purposes:

(1) licensing or certification tests, the successful completion of which demonstrates an individual's possession of the knowledge or skill required to enter into, maintain, or advance in employment in a predetermined and identified vocation or profession, provided that the tests and the licensing or credentialing organizations or entities that offer the tests are approved by the commissioner;

(2) tests for admission to institutions of higher learning or graduate schools;

(3) national tests providing an opportunity for course credit at institutions of higher learning;

(4) a preparatory course for a test that is required or used for admission to an institution of higher education or a graduate program; and

(5) any fee associated with the pursuit of a professional or educational objective specified in clauses (1) to (4).

(d) If an eligible person receives benefits under subdivision 5, the eligible person's aggregate benefits under this subdivision and subdivision 5 must not exceed \$10,000 in the eligible person's lifetime.

(e) If an eligible person receives benefits under subdivision 5a, the eligible person's aggregate benefits under this subdivision and subdivision 5a must not exceed \$10,000 in the eligible person's lifetime.

Sec. 4. Minnesota Statutes 2016, section 197.791, subdivision 6, is amended to read:

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

Presented to the governor May 16, 2018

Signed by the governor May 19, 2018, 4:54 p.m.