

Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

CS/HB 339 — Education of Dependents of Deceased or Disabled Servicemembers, Prisoners of War, and Persons Missing in Action

by Local Administration, Federal Affairs, and Special Districts Subcommittee and Rep. Yarkosky and others (CS/SB 550 by Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee and Senator Burgess)

The bill removes a 1-year residency requirement on educational benefits provided to a dependent child or spouse of a disabled or deceased servicemember through the Scholarships for Children and Spouses of Deceased or Disabled Veterans program. A dependent or spouse of a deceased or disabled person who served in the United States Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, Coast Guard, Florida National Guard, or United States Reserve Forces may be eligible for a scholarship under this program if eligibility requirements are met.

The bill revises the residency requirement providing that a dependent child or spouse may receive the educational benefits if Florida was listed as the servicemember's official home of record in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System database immediately preceding the death or disability of the servicemember or if the dependent child or spouse of the servicemember qualifies as a resident for tuition purposes (RFTP). Qualifying as an RFTP means that the child or spouse is a dependent for purposes of tax filings.

The bill similarly revises educational benefits available to dependent children of prisoners of war, persons missing in action, or persons who died or were disabled during the military operations of Operation Eagle Claw, Operation Urgent Fury, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Desert Shield, or Operation Just Cause.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2023.

Vote: Senate 39-0; House 111-0