

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Subject: Veterans; survivor eligibility under War Orphans Act; residency requirement modified

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Overview

This bill would slightly broaden eligibility for the educational benefits under the Minnesota War Orphans Act for the surviving spouses and children of deceased veterans who have died of service-connected injuries, illnesses or diseases.

Under current law, for a survivor of such veteran to be eligible for the benefits, the veteran must have been a Minnesota resident within six months of entry into the military.

As amended, the bill would broaden eligibility for the program by broadening the definition of “*deceased veteran*” to include any veteran who (having died of service-connected causes) was a Minnesota resident:

- 1) at any time during the person’s military service; or
- 2) at the time of death; or
- 3) whose surviving spouse or child was a Minnesota resident at the time of the veteran’s death.

The bill would also broaden the definition of “eligible child” to include any stepchild of the deceased veteran (in addition to any natural or adopted children of the deceased veteran).

Background:

Educational benefits for an eligible spouse and eligible children under the War Orphans Act include:

- 1) a stipend of \$750 each year while the eligible survivor is successfully pursuing an undergraduate degree; and
- 2) free tuition at a public higher educational institution while the survivor is

successfully pursuing an undergraduate degree.

Note: A separate provision of this program provides a *one-time* \$750 stipend to “*eligible veterans*” who are still living and attending higher education in Minnesota. This bill does not modify the residency requirement for those living veterans. Thus, it would continue to be the case that any *living* “eligible veteran” must have been a Minnesota resident at the time of the person’s enlistment or reenlistment into the military.