
THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 264
Author: Carrillo (D), et al.
Introduced: 1/16/25
Vote: 21

SENATE MILITARY & VETERANS COMMITTEE: 5-0, 7/14/25

AYES: Archuleta, Grove, McNerney, Menjivar, Umberg

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 7-0, 8/29/25

AYES: Caballero, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Dahle, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 70-0, 5/29/25 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Veterans: benefits

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: This bill eliminates the prohibition on a child of a veteran, an unmarried surviving spouse of a veteran, or spouse of a disabled veteran from receiving a tuition waiver from the state while also accessing other state of federal educational benefits.

ANALYSIS:

Existing state law administers, via the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet), the College Fee Waiver for Veteran Dependents, which waives mandatory system-wide tuition and fees at any California Community College (CCC), California State University (CSU), or University of California (UC) campus. This program does not cover the expense of books, parking, or room and board. There are four plans under which dependents of veterans may be eligible, Plans A, B C, and D.

Existing federal law administers, via The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), education benefits for veterans' dependents and survivors. Two main programs offer educational assistance to veterans' survivors and dependents.

- a) The Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship (Fry Scholarship) is for children and spouses of active duty service members who died in the line of duty on or after September 11, 2001, or members of the Selected Reserve who died from a service-connected disability on or after September 11, 2001. The Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA) program, also called Chapter 35, offers education and training to qualified dependents of veterans who are permanently and totally disabled because of a service-related condition, or who died while on active duty or as a result of a service-related condition. DEA recipients receive a monthly payment to help cover the cost of college or graduate degree programs, career training certificate courses, educational and career counseling, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training. The current funding rate for DEA recipients is \$1,536 per month for 36 months. The Fry Scholarship is *not* subject to the concurrent benefit prohibition, while the DEA is.

This bill allows a qualified child or spouse of a veteran who is permanently and totally disabled, or who died in the line of duty, to concurrently receive educational benefits under the California College Tuition Fee Waiver and the federal Survivors' and DEA programs.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

The University of California estimates General Fund costs of \$1.2 million each year to provide additional fee waivers under the California College Tuition Fee Waiver program.

CalVet anticipates no additional costs as a result of the measure.

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/29/2025)

American Legion, Department of California
AMVETs, Department of California
California Association of County Veterans Service Officers
California Association of Veterans Service Agencies
California State Commanders Veterans Council
CFT, AFT, AFL-CIO
Military Officers Association of America, California Council of Chapters
Peace Officers Research Association of California
Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of California
Vietnam Veterans of America, California State Council

OPPOSITION:

None received

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT:

According to the author, spouses and children of disabled veterans are eligible for both the California College Tuition Fee Waiver and Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA). Veterans have earned these benefits through the severity of their injuries during their time of service, including the hundreds of thousands who live within my district. Due to inflation, rising tuition rates, and the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is an exacerbated need to accept both programs simultaneously.

California has seen the positive impact that higher educational programs have had on the lives of veterans and their families, and there isn't a clear justification for denying access to both forms of aid concurrently. By repealing this outdated prohibition, we honor our veterans and their time of service while making tangible differences in the lives of those who sacrificed greatly for our nation."

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 70-0, 5/29/25

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Stefani, Ta, Valencia, Wallis, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NO VOTE RECORDED: Alvarez, Bryan, Chen, Nguyen, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Tangipa, Ward

Prepared by: Bill Herms / M.&V.A. / (916) 651-1503
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