

---

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

---

SENATE BILL

No. 91 Session of  
2025

---

INTRODUCED BY MASTRIANO, CULVER AND FONTANA, JANUARY 22, 2025

---

REFERRED TO VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS,  
JANUARY 22, 2025

---

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of December 16, 1998 (P.L.980, No.129),  
2 entitled "An act providing for a waiver of tuition and other  
3 fees for children of certain deceased police officers,  
4 National Guard members, firefighters and correction employees  
5 at community colleges and State-owned and State-related  
6 institutions of higher education and for additional powers  
7 and duties of the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance  
8 Agency and the Department of General Services," further  
9 providing for definitions and for Postsecondary Educational  
10 Gratuity Program; and repealing provisions relating to  
11 retroactivity.

12 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
13 hereby enacts as follows:

14 Section 1. The definitions of "firefighter," "municipality,"  
15 "police officer" and "volunteer fire company" in section 2 of  
16 the act of December 16, 1998 (P.L.980, No.129), known as the  
17 Police Officer, Firefighter, Correction Employee and National  
18 Guard Member Child Beneficiary Education Act, are amended to  
19 read:

20 Section 2. Definitions.

21 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall  
22 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the

1 context clearly indicates otherwise:

2 \* \* \*

3 "Firefighter." An individual employed in that capacity on a  
4 full-time basis [by a municipality] or a member of a volunteer  
5 fire company [of this Commonwealth]. The term includes members  
6 of a rescue squad or ambulance service [as defined in the act of  
7 June 24, 1976 (P.L.424, No.101), referred to as the Emergency  
8 and Law Enforcement Personnel Death Benefits Act.]. The term  
9 includes members of a rescue squad or ambulance service outside  
10 of this Commonwealth.

11 \* \* \*

12 ["Municipality." A county, city, borough, incorporated town  
13 or township, regardless of form of government.]

14 \* \* \*

15 "Police officer." An individual employed on a full-time or  
16 part-time basis by the Commonwealth as a member of the  
17 Pennsylvania State Police Force or an individual employed on a  
18 full-time or part-time basis as a police officer [by a  
19 municipality of this Commonwealth]. The term includes a police  
20 officer employed outside of this Commonwealth.

21 \* \* \*

22 "Volunteer fire company." A nonprofit chartered corporation,  
23 association or organization [located in this Commonwealth] which  
24 provides fire protection services [within this Commonwealth].

25 Section 2. Section 3(a) of the act is amended to read:

26 Section 3. Postsecondary Educational Gratuity Program.

27 (a) Establishment.--

28 (1) There is hereby established the Postsecondary  
29 Educational Gratuity Program for children of police officers,  
30 firefighters, correction employees, sheriffs, deputy sheriffs

1 and National Guard members and certain other individuals who  
2 are on Federal or State active military duty who, except as  
3 provided under paragraph (2), are residents of this  
4 Commonwealth who are killed while acting in the performance  
5 of their duties.

6 (2) A police officer, firefighter, sheriff or deputy  
7 sheriff who is employed in that capacity on a full-time basis  
8 outside this Commonwealth or as a member of a volunteer fire  
9 company located outside of this Commonwealth must have been a  
10 full-time resident of this Commonwealth for a continuous  
11 period of at least three years at the time of their death.

12 \* \* \*

13 Section 3. Section 8 of the act is repealed:

14 [Section 8. Retroactivity.]

15 This act shall be retroactive to January 1, 1976, and the  
16 benefit provided shall be available to qualified children of  
17 police officers, firefighters, correction employees and National  
18 Guard members of this Commonwealth killed in the performance of  
19 their duties since that date. No community college, State-owned  
20 or State-related institution shall reimburse qualified children  
21 for tuition and fees or room and board charges paid between  
22 January 1, 1976, and the effective date of this act.]

23 Section 4. The amendment of the definitions of  
24 "firefighter," "municipality," "police officer" and "volunteer  
25 fire company" in section 2 and section 3(a) of the act shall  
26 apply retroactively to January 1, 2004, and the benefit provided  
27 shall be available to qualified children of police officers,  
28 firefighters, rescue squad or ambulance service members,  
29 sheriffs and deputy sheriffs killed in the performance of their  
30 duties since that date. A community college, State-owned or

1 State-related institution may not reimburse qualified children  
2 for tuition and fees or room and board charges paid between  
3 January 1, 2004, and the effective date of this section.

4 Section 5. The Legislative Reference Bureau shall, within 30  
5 days of the effective date of this section, remove the findings  
6 and declarations from the act.

7 Section 6. This act shall take effect immediately.