ASSEMBLY, No. 5528

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

222nd LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED SEPTEMBER 17, 2026

Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman HEATHER SIMMONS
District 3 (Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem)

SYNOPSIS

Expands eligibility of tuition benefits for eligible children and surviving spouses of certain public safety workers.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

AN ACT expanding eligibility of survivor tuition benefits and amending N.J.S.18A:71B-23.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. N.J.S.18A:71B-23 is amended to read as follows:

18A:71B-23. Any child or surviving spouse of a member or officer of a New Jersey volunteer fire company, volunteer first aid or rescue squad or municipal fire, police, county police or park police department, State fire service or of the division of State police, or of a permanent, active and full-time officer employee of this State or any political subdivision thereof holding the following titles: State investigator, correction officer, recruit, senior correction officer, sergeant, lieutenant, captain, correction officer duty keeper, court attendant and sheriff's officer, court attendant and sheriff's officer lieutenant, court attendant and sheriff's officer captain, court attendant and sheriff's officer deputy chief, prosecutor's detective, prosecutor's investigator, narcotics officer, marine patrolman, senior marine patrolman, principal marine patrolman, chief, bureau of marine law enforcement, or who is an inspector, assistant, technician, supervisor or superintendent with respect to the enforcement and regulation of weights and measures, or civil defense or disaster control worker, which member, officer or worker was killed in the performance of **[**his**]** duties as a member of such company, squad or fire or police department or division, or worker in a civil defense or disaster control unit <u>or dies by suicide as a member of such company, squad or fire or police department or division, or worker in a civil defense or disaster control unit</u>, upon such child or surviving spouse being accepted to pursue a course of undergraduate study in any public institution of higher education of this State, as enumerated in N.J.S.18A:62-1, shall, while enrolled as an undergraduate student in good standing at the institution, have the tuition paid by the State; or upon that child or surviving spouse being accepted to pursue a course of undergraduate study at any independent institution of higher education located in the State, shall, while enrolled as an undergraduate in good standing at that independent institution of higher education, have that part of the tuition which is not more than the highest tuition charged at the public institutions of higher education in this State, enumerated in N.J.S.18A:62-1, paid by the State.

Eligibility for this program shall be limited to a period of eight years following graduation from high school, in the case of a child, pursuant to rules and regulations established by the authority. There shall be no time limit on eligibility for this program in the case of a surviving spouse.

(cf: P.L.2019, c.378. s.1)

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined <u>thus</u> is new matter.

STATEMENT

This bill expands eligibility of tuition benefits for eligible children and surviving spouses of certain public safety workers who die by suicide.

Under current law, the children or surviving spouses of certain public safety workers, such as members of police and fire departments, who are killed in the performance of their duties may be eligible for a higher education tuition benefit. To be eligible, the child or spouse must be enrolled in good standing at an undergraduate program in the State. The State pays full tuition costs to a public institution of higher education and full or partial tuition costs to an independent institution of higher education. Current law limits eligibility to the eligible children or surviving spouses of those who are killed in the performance of their duties. This bill expands eligibility to the eligible children or surviving spouses of public safety works who die by suicide.