

Senate Bill No. 496

An act relating to educational benefits for dependent children of military personnel who die or incur total and permanent disability while participating in Operation Enduring Freedom; creating s. 295.0185, F.S.; providing educational opportunity at state expense for dependent children of military personnel who die or suffer a specified disability in Operation Enduring Freedom; specifying documentation that constitutes proof of eligibility for such benefits; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 295.0185, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

295.0185 Children of deceased or disabled military personnel who die or become disabled in Operation Enduring Freedom; educational opportunity.—

(1) It is declared to be the policy of the state to provide educational opportunity at state expense for the dependent children of those military personnel who die or suffer a service-connected 100-percent total and permanent disability rating for compensation as determined by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, or who are determined to have a service-connected total and permanent disability rating of 100 percent and are in receipt of disability retirement pay from any branch of the United States Armed Services, while participating in Operation Enduring Freedom, which began on October 7, 2001, if such military personnel have been residents of the state during the period of military action. A certified copy of a death certificate, a valid identification card issued in accordance with the provisions of s. 295.17, a letter certifying the service-connected 100-percent total and permanent disability rating for compensation from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, or a letter certifying the service-connected total and permanent disability rating of 100 percent for retirement pay from any branch of the United States Armed Services is prima facie evidence that the dependent children of such military personnel are eligible for educational benefits.

(2) The provisions of ss. 240.404, 295.03, 295.04, and 295.05 apply.

Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

Approved by the Governor May 24, 2002.

Filed in Office Secretary of State May 24, 2002.