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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO MILITARY AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE -- NATIONAL GUARD

Introduced By: Senators Patalano, Ciccone, Tikoian, Famiglietti, Appollonio, Thompson, Raptakis, Burke, Urso, and Dimitri

Date Introduced: January 30, 2026

Referred To: Senate Special Legislation and Veterans Affairs

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 30-3-40.3 of the General Laws in Chapter 30-3 entitled "National
2 Guard" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **30-3-40.3. Educational benefits for National Guard members.**

4 **(a) For the purpose of this section, the following terms are defined as follows:**

5 **(1) "Dependent(s)" means the national guard member's immediate family members**
6 **enrolled in the defense enrollment reporting eligibility system (DEERS).**

7 **(2) "National guard member" means an airman or a solider who is an active member in**
8 **good standing of the Rhode Island national guard.**

9 **(3) "Member in good standing" means any national guard member who is currently**
10 **satisfactorily participating in all unit training assemblies and annual training periods, as so certified**
11 **by the adjutant general.**

12 **(a)(b) Any person who is an active member in good standing of the Rhode Island national**
13 **guard, and who is eligible to attend at any state college or university in Rhode Island, will be eligible**
14 **for a tuition assistance educational benefit amounting to five (5) courses per semester at any Rhode**
15 **Island state college or university. National guard members may allocate their state-sponsored**
16 **tuition assistance benefits to their dependents.** Basic tuition or general fee charges to be waived for
17 **said five (5) courses. Each of the state colleges or universities shall receive an equal share of the**
18 **educational account funding for Rhode Island national guard members, the account to be**
19 **administered by the office of the adjutant general. The exact amount for each institution shall be**

1 determined by the board of governors. The total amount of funds in the education account shall not
2 exceed one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) in any fiscal year.

3 (b)(c) In order to be eligible for tuition waivers for themselves or their dependent, a person
4 national guard member must remain a member in good standing in the Rhode Island national guard
5 and the national guard member or their dependent must remain a student in good standing at any
6 state college or university. ~~A member in good standing is defined as any soldier or airperson of the~~
7 ~~Rhode Island national guard who is currently satisfactorily participating in all unit training~~
8 ~~assemblies and annual training periods, as so certified by the adjutant general.~~

9 (e)(d) Those national guard members wishing to participate in this program must enter into
10 a contractual enlistment commitment that provides for one year of obligated service in the Rhode
11 Island national guard for each twelve (12) course credits or four (4) three-credit (3) courses where
12 the ~~soldier's or airperson's~~ national guard member's or their dependent's tuition will be waived.
13 Such assistance shall be available for courses creditable to associate, bachelor's, or master's
14 degrees. Failure to satisfactorily fulfill the service obligation incurred in return for tuition assistance
15 will require the ~~participant~~ national guard member or their dependent to repay a pro-rata share of
16 said assistance. This obligation shall be considered to be a debt owed to the state and may be
17 satisfied by offset against any state transfer payments or state income tax refunds. The ~~participating~~
18 ~~member~~ national guard member or their dependent shall reimburse the Rhode Island national guard
19 when any of the following occur: the ~~soldier~~ national guard member fails to participate
20 satisfactorily as a member of the Rhode Island national guard; the ~~soldier~~ national guard member
21 or their dependent withdraws from, or fails to complete, a course for personal reasons; the ~~soldier~~
22 national guard member or their dependent fails to make up an incomplete grade within time limits
23 stipulated by the institution or one hundred twenty (120) days after the completion of the class,
24 whichever occurs first; or the ~~soldier~~ national guard member fails to provide the adjutant general a
25 copy of the national guard member's grade report within thirty (30) days of course completion and
26 may be subject to punishment under the Rhode Island military code.

27 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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- 1 This would allow the dependents of a national guard member, who is in good standing, to
- 2 be eligible for tuition assistance.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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