

## Department of Planning and Budget

### 2007 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. **Bill Number** HB 2179  
**House of Origin** ☐ Introduced ☐ Substitute ☐ Engrossed  
**Second House** ☐ In Committee ☐ Substitute ☒ Enrolled
2. **Patron** Janis
3. **Committee** Passed both Houses
4. **Title** Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program

**5. Summary/Purpose:** Revises the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program to clarify that qualified survivors and dependents shall be admitted to any public institution of higher education or other public accredited postsecondary institution of higher education or other public accredited postsecondary institution granting a degree, diploma, or certificate in the Commonwealth of Virginia, free of tuition and all required fees.

This legislation establishes the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Fund to provide financial assistance for board and room charges, books and supplies, and other expenses. The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia would be responsible for disbursing funds appropriated or otherwise made available to support the Fund.

**6. Fiscal Impact Estimates are:** Final. See Item 8.

**7. Budget amendment necessary:** No.

**8. Fiscal implications:** At present, the state's higher education institutions absorb the costs of tuition and fees for individuals qualifying under the existing military survivors and dependents statute, but not costs associated with room, board, supplies and books. Consistent with the proposed Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Fund created by this legislation, the Governor has provided \$1 million in his introduced budget to reimburse the costs of the state higher education institutions for providing free room and board to qualifying individuals who live in on-campus housing. The Senate maintains the Governor's proposal in their proposed budget. The House budget, though, changes the parameters of this Fund, providing only a \$1,500 stipend to each eligible person for room, board, books and supplies. In effect, this eliminates the free room and board provided under the Governor's proposal as each individual would have to pay the difference between the \$1,500 stipend and the actual cost for room, board, books and supplies.

At present, there is no available data to determine the exact amount of funding required. In addition, the number of eligible students is decreasing as the surviving dependents (children) of individuals killed in the Vietnam and first Gulf War have passed the eligible age ranges for these benefits. (There are approximately 100 individuals from Virginia who have been killed either in the War on Terror or the Iraq war.) Given this, the State Council of Higher Education for

Virginia will administer this Fund, and as actual reimbursement requests come in from the higher education institutions, better information will become available on the appropriate level of funding for the Fund.

**9. Specific agency or political subdivisions affected:** All state colleges and universities, State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.

**10. Technical amendment necessary:** No.

**11. Other comments:** None

**Date:** 2/16/07/RSA

C: Secretary of Education