



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

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RICHMOND, VA 23219

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Veteran Textbook Support Grant

OBJECTIVE: To establish a Veterans Textbook Support Grant in Virginia, providing financial assistance for textbooks and course materials to address a critical unmet need among student veterans, strengthen educational outcomes, and align Virginia with neighboring states that already offer veteran-specific education benefits.

BACKGROUND: The average student spends approximately \$1,500 annually on textbooks and course supplies. This burden often exceeds what is covered by the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill's book stipend, which caps at \$1,000 per academic year. Virginia is one of only nine states in the Country that does **not** currently offer a state-level veterans education grant. All surrounding states: including Maryland, West Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky; offer veteran-specific higher education funding. In 2022, more than 44,000 student veterans used the Post-9/11 GI Bill at 304 educational institutions in Virginia. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs disbursed over \$301 million to these schools, reflecting Virginia's role as a national leader in veteran education.

DISCUSSION: The Veterans Textbook Support Grant would provide up to \$1,000 per year to help cover the out-of-pocket costs of books and course materials for eligible veterans pursuing higher education in Virginia.

This initiative will: bridge the financial gap between GI Bill support and the actual cost of academic materials, reduce financial stress, and make Virginia more attractive to transitioning service members and military-connected students

RECOMMENDATION: That the Governor and General Assembly establish and fund a Veterans Textbook Support Grant to provide up to \$1,000 per year to eligible student veterans who: Are currently enrolled in a degree, certificate, or vocational program at an accredited Virginia institution. They must be able to demonstrate prior military service via documentation and must be verified by a School Certifying Official (SCO) at their institution