

Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
Meeting Minutes
May 29, 2024

A meeting of the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC) was held on May 29, 2024, at 5 p.m. via Zoom.

Members Present

1. Richard Shook, Air Force Association
2. William Aramony, American Legion
3. Glenn Yarborough, Association of the United States Army
4. Denice Williams, Disabled American Veterans
5. Sha'ron D. Martin, Fleet Reserve Association
6. Lance Leshner, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America
7. Jack Hilgers, Legion of Valor
8. Monti Zimmerman, Military Officers Association of America
9. Mark Atchison, Military Order of the Purple Heart
10. Vernon Peters, Military Order of the World Wars
11. Daniel Cortez, National Vet Court Alliance
12. Preston Curry, Paralyzed Veterans of America
13. Terrence Moore, Reserve Association of America
14. Katherine Martinez, Student Veterans of America
15. Rick Raskin, Veterans of Foreign Wars
16. George Corbett, Vietnam Veterans of America
17. Kevin Hoffman, Virginia National Guard Association
18. Jose Ramos, Wounded Warrior Project
19. Carl Bedell, representing the Board of Veterans Services
20. Brad Williamson, Chair, Veterans Services Foundation
21. Chuck Zingler, Commissioner, Department of Veterans Services

Members Absent

1. Rich Mansfield, Air Force Sergeants Association
2. Thad Jones, Fifth Baptist Church Veterans Ministry
3. John Clickener, Marine Corps League
4. Michelle Ramos Domingue, Navy Mutual Aid Association
5. Dan Karnes, Roanoke Valley Veterans Council
6. Carl Holcomb, Virginia Army/Air National Guard Enlisted Association
7. Ann Crittenden, Women Marines Association

Alternate Members attending, representing their VSO

1. John Cooper, Air Force Sergeants Association
2. Meredith Burns, Navy Mutual Aid Association

Alternates Present, not representing their VSO

1. David Sitler, Reserve Association of America

Commonwealth of Virginia Officials and Board Members Present

1. Jordan Stewart, Deputy Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs
2. Steven Combs, DVS Department of Veterans Services (DVS)
3. Ravi Padma, DVS

Guests

1. Joshua Adams
2. Omowumi Adewole
3. Kristin Case
4. Austin Clayton
5. Paul Clayton
6. Rebecca Costa
7. Steve Delanty
8. Joe Dodson
9. Dan Dukes
10. Heath Dunbar
11. Kristen Fenty
12. Daniel Gade
13. Francine Golding
14. Daniel Goodale-Porter
15. Caitlin Goodale-Porter
16. Amy Hannum
17. Stephen Hopkins
18. Brian Koch
19. Donna Lewis
20. C. Marquez
21. Alison Messick
22. Kristy McGinnis
23. Karen McKeown
24. Beth Mellott
25. Lydia Nichols
26. Kayla Owen
27. Michael Parker
28. Theresa Ramirez
29. Jenna Rowe
30. Rebekah Sanderlin
31. Thomas Santoro
32. Jennifer Salzman
33. Stephanie Slocum
34. Yoli Smith
35. Brian Solano

36. Michelle Sullivan

Items included in the Agenda Packet

- Draft Agenda
- Copy of Item 4.5-01, 2024 Acts of Assembly, Special Session I
- Copy of Executive Directive Seven
- Copy of Governor Youngkin Press Release regarding the First Meeting Date and Members of “Preserving Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program Task Force”

Item I. Opening and Pledge of Allegiance

Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (JLC) Chair Kevin Hoffman called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. Vice Chairman Monti Zimmerman led the JLC in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Item II. Opening thoughts and meditation

JLC Chaplain Mark Atchison provided thoughts and meditation.

Item III. Roll Call of VSOs and Quorum Determination

The roll was called, and 20 of the 25 Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) represented on the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC) were recorded as being present, therefore a quorum was determined. The Board of Veterans Services, Veterans Services Foundation, and the Department of Veterans Services were recorded as present.

Item IV. Approve Agenda

Mr. Rick Raskin made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Preston Curry, to approve the meeting agenda as presented. The motion carried by unanimous assent. The approved agenda is attached.

Item V. VMSDEP Discussion

JLC Vice Chairman Monti Zimmerman reviewed the changes to VMSDEP that were included in the Appropriations Act for the 2024-2026 Biennium (Item 4.5-01, 2024 Acts of Assembly, Special Session I). He first covered the history of the program, then turned to the specific changes made to the program.

Commissioner Zingler spoke about the 11th hour nature of the changes, the “salt in the wound” of the grandfather clause, the VMSDEP task force (Executive Directive 7), the need for transparency and accuracy in facts used to make projections, and the support of the Governor, the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, the Secretary of Education, and other stakeholders. He spoke about the Executive Directive, the need to listen to stakeholders, and the need for accurate data to make recommendations and decisions about the future of the session.

Item VI. New Business

Vice Chairman Monti Zimmerman made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Rick Raskin, that the JLC issue a statement calling for Governor and the General Assembly to call a Special Session before the end of June 2024 to postpone the changes to the VMSDEP to mitigate the impact on current students and

to allow time for the Executive Directive 7 task force to review the changes.

The roll was called. The motion carried unanimously (20 Yes, 0 No).

Daniel Cortez suggested that JLC members contact their local media to spotlight the issue.

There was no other new business.

Item VII. Public Comment Period

JLC Chairman Kevin Hoffman opened the meeting to public comment. Kayla Owen and Daniel Gade offered comments in support of the JLC's actions.

Item VIII. Closing Remarks

JLC Chairman Kevin Hoffman thanked the members for being on the meeting tonight. He stated that he would work with JLC members to write the JLC statement on VMSDEP and get it out to all members ASAP via e-mail.

Ms. Katherine Martinez asked that the statement be posted on the JLC webpage.

Item IX. Adjourn

Chair Hoffman adjourned the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

APPROVED AGENDA

May 29, 2024

17:00-17:45

Zoom Call

- I. Opening, Meeting Notes, and Pledge of Allegiance – *Kevin Hoffman, JLC Chairman* (17:00-17:03)
- II. Opening Thoughts & Meditation, *Mark Atchison, JLC Chaplain* (17:03-17:05)
- III. Roll call and quorum determination (17:05-17:07)
- IV. Approve Agenda – *Kevin Hoffman, JLC Chairman* (17:07-17:08)
- V. VMSDEP Discussion (17:08-17:30)
 - a. What changed in the budget?
 - b. Executive Directive 7.
 - c. Preserving Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Task Force
 - Monti Zimmerman and Katherine Martinez both selected as members
 - d. Next Steps
- VI. New Business (17:30-17:38)
- VII. Public comment period –*JLC Chair* (17:38-17:42)
- VIII. Closing remarks –*JLC Chair* (17:43-17:45)
- IX. Adjourn (17:45)

2024 Special Session I

Budget Bill - HB6001 (Chapter 2)

[Bill Order](#) » [Part 4: General Provisions](#) » Special Conditions and Restrictions on Expenditures
» Item 4-5.01

Transactions with Individuals

Item 4-5.01

§ 4-5.00 SPECIAL CONDITIONS AND RESTRICTIONS ON EXPENDITURES

§ 4-5.01 TRANSACTIONS WITH INDIVIDUALS

a. SETTLEMENT OF CLAIMS: Whenever a dispute, claim or controversy involving the interest of the Commonwealth is settled pursuant to § [2.2-514](#), Code of Virginia, payment may be made out of any appropriations, designated by the Governor, to the state agency(ies) which is (are) party to the settlement.

b. STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION:

1. General:

a) The appropriations made in this act to state institutions of higher education within the Items for student financial assistance may be expended for any one, all, or any combination of the following purposes: grants to undergraduate students enrolled at least one-half time in a degree, certificate, industry-based certification and related programs that do not qualify for other sources of student financial assistance or diploma program; grants to full-time graduate students; graduate assistantships: grants to students enrolled full-time in a dual or concurrent undergraduate and graduate program. The institutions may also use these appropriations for the purpose of supporting work study programs. The institution is required to transfer to educational and general appropriations all funds used for work study or to pay graduate assistantships. Institutions may also contribute to federal or private student grant aid programs requiring matching funds by the institution, except for programs

requiring work. The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia shall annually review each institution's plan for the expenditures of its general fund appropriation for undergraduate student financial assistance prior to the start of the fall term to determine program compliance. The institution's plan shall include the institution's assumptions and calculations for determining the cost of attendance, student financial need, and student remaining need as well as an award schedule or description of how funds are awarded. For the purposes of the proposed plan, each community college shall be considered independently. No limitations shall be placed on the awarding of nongeneral fund appropriations made in this act to state institutions of higher education within the Items for student financial assistance other than those found previously in this paragraph and as follows: (i) funds derived from in-state student tuition will not subsidize out-of-state students, (ii) students receiving these funds must be making satisfactory academic progress, (iii) awards made to students should be based primarily on financial need, and (iv) institutions should make larger grant and scholarship awards to students taking the number of credit hours necessary to complete a degree in a timely manner.

b) All awards made to undergraduate students from such Items shall be for Virginia students only and such awards shall offset all, or portions of, the costs of tuition and required fees, and, in the case of students qualifying under subdivision b 2 c)1) hereof, the cost of books. All undergraduate financial aid award amounts funded by this appropriation shall be proportionate to the remaining need of individual students, with students with higher levels of remaining need receiving grants before other students. No criteria other than the need of the student shall be used to determine the award amount. Because of the low cost of attendance and recognizing that federal grants provide a much higher portion of cost than at other institutions, a modified approach and minimum award amount for the neediest VGAP student should be implemented for community college and Richard Bland College students based on remaining need and the combination of federal and grant state aid. Student financial need shall be determined by a need-analysis system approved by the Council.

c)1) All need-based awards made to graduate students shall be determined by the use of a need-analysis system approved by the Council.

2) As part of the six-year financial plans required in the provisions of Chapters 933 and 945 of the 2005 Acts of Assembly, each institution of higher education shall report the extent to which tuition and fee revenues are used to support graduate student aid and graduate compensation and how the use of these funds impacts planned increases in student tuition and fees.

d) A student who receives a grant under such Items and who, during a semester, withdraws from the institution which made the award must surrender the unearned portion. The institution shall calculate the unearned portion of the award based on the percentage used for federal Return to Title IV program purposes.

e) An award made under such Items to assist a student in attending an institution's summer session shall be prorated according to the size of comparable awards made in that institution's regular session.

f) The provisions of this act under the heading "Student Financial Assistance for Higher Education" shall not apply to (1) the soil scientist scholarships authorized under § [23.1-615](#), Code of Virginia and (2) need-based financial aid programs for industry-based certification and related programs that do not qualify for other sources of student financial assistance, which will be subject to guidelines developed by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.

g) Unless noted elsewhere in this act, general fund awards shall be named "Commonwealth" grants.

h) Unless otherwise provided by statute, undergraduate awards shall not be made to students seeking a second or additional baccalaureate degree until the financial aid needs of first-degree seeking students are fully met.

i) In determining financial need for student financial assistance, the institution shall recognize the federal Student Aid Index at no less than zero.

j) Students receiving student financial assistance in 2023-2024 may be considered for Virginia Student Financial Assistance Program awards based on the Expected Family Contribution demonstrated in 2023-2024, or appropriately adjusted need as determined by the institution, for as long as the student maintains continuous enrollment, unless granted an exception for cause by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, until current degree completion

or current degree program eligibility limits have otherwise expired, whichever comes first.

k) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the Student Aid Index as calculated according to federal Title IV financial aid methodology shall be deemed an approved replacement of any mention or use of the precedent federal Expected Family Contribution for purposes of administering state higher education financial aid programs.

l) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, private institutions admitted on or after January 1, 2024 in any state program of higher education financial assistance shall (i) be a nonprofit private institution of higher education whose primary purpose is to provide collegiate, graduate, or professional education and not to provide religious training or theological education; (ii) be formed, chartered, established, or incorporated within the Commonwealth; (iii) have their principal place of business within the Commonwealth; (iv) conduct their primary educational activity within the Commonwealth; and (v) be accredited by a nationally recognized regional institutional accrediting agency.

2. Grants To Undergraduate Students:

a) Each institution which makes undergraduate grants paid from its appropriation for student financial assistance shall expend such sums as approved for that purpose by the Council.

b) A student receiving an award must be duly admitted and enrolled in a degree, certificate or diploma program at the institution making the award, and shall be making satisfactory academic progress as defined by the institution for the purposes of eligibility under Title IV of the federal Higher Education Act, as amended.

c)1) It is the intent of the General Assembly that students eligible under the Virginia Guaranteed Assistance Program (VGAP) authorized in Title 23.1, Chapter 4.4:2, Code of Virginia, shall receive grants before all other students at the same institution with equivalent remaining need from the appropriations for undergraduate student financial assistance found in Part 1 of this act (service area 1081000 - Scholarships). In each instance, VGAP eligible students

shall receive awards greater than other students with equivalent remaining need.

2) The amount of each VGAP grant shall vary according to each student's remaining need and the total of tuition, all required fees and the cost of books at the institution the student will attend upon acceptance for admission. The actual amount of the VGAP award will be determined by the proportionate award schedule adopted by each institution; however, those students with the greatest financial need shall be guaranteed an award at least equal to tuition.

3) It is the intent of the General Assembly that the Virginia Guaranteed Assistance Program serve as an incentive to financially needy students now attending elementary and secondary school in Virginia to raise their expectations and their academic performance and to consider higher education an achievable objective in their futures.

4) Students may not receive a VGAP and a Commonwealth grant in the same semester.

d) Of the amount allocated for undergraduate need-based financial aid, up to one percent may be used for emergency assistance programs for students facing a financial emergency that puts them at risk of dropping out. The Council shall establish reporting guidelines and approve criteria for making student awards.

3. Grants To Graduate Students:

a) An individual award may be based on financial need but may, in addition to or instead of, be based on other criteria determined by the institution making the award. The amount of an award shall be determined by the institution making the award; however, the Council shall annually be notified as to the maximum size of a graduate award that is paid from funds in the appropriation.

b) A student receiving a graduate award paid from the appropriation must be duly admitted into a graduate degree program at the institution making the award.

c) Not more than 50 percent of the funds designated by an institution as graduate grants from the appropriation, and approved as such by the Council,

shall be awarded to persons not eligible to be classified as Virginia domiciliary resident students except in cases where the persons meet the criteria outlined in § 4-2.01b.6.

4. Matching Funds: Any institution of higher education may, with the approval of the Council, use funds from its appropriation for fellowships and scholarships to provide the institutional contribution to any student financial aid program established by the federal government or private sources which requires the matching of the contribution by institutional funds, except for programs requiring work.

5. Discontinued Loan Program:

a) If any federal student loan program for which the institutional contribution was appropriated by the General Assembly is discontinued, the institutional share of the discontinued loan program shall be repaid to the fund from which the institutional share was derived unless other arrangements for the use of the funds are recommended by the Council and approved by the Department of Planning and Budget. Should the institution be permitted to retain the federal contributions to the program, the funds shall be used according to arrangements authorized by the Council and approved by the Department of Planning and Budget.

b)1) An institution of higher education may discontinue its student loan fund established pursuant to Title 23.1, Chapter 4.01, Code of Virginia. The full amount of cash in such discontinued loan fund shall be paid into the state treasury into a nonrevertible nongeneral fund account. Prior to such payment, the State Comptroller shall verify its accuracy, including the fact that the cash held by the institution in the loan fund will be fully depleted by such payment. The loan fund shall not be reestablished thereafter for that institution.

2) The cash so paid into the state treasury shall be used only for grants to undergraduate and graduate students in the Higher Education Student Financial Assistance program according to arrangements authorized by the Council and approved by the Department of Planning and Budget.

3) Payments on principal and interest of any promissory notes held by the discontinued loan fund shall continue to be received by the institution, which

shall deposit such payments in the state treasury to the nonrevertible nongeneral fund account specified in subdivision (1) preceding, to be used for grants as specified in subdivision (2) preceding.

6. Reporting: The Council shall collect student-specific information for undergraduate students as is necessary for the operation of the Student Financial Assistance Program. The Council shall maintain regulations governing the operation of the Student Financial Assistance Program based on the provisions outlined in this section, the Code of Virginia, and State Council policy.

7. Waivers and Related Stipends

a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, individuals eligible for any financial aid waivers and related stipends contained in § 23.1, Chapter 6 shall:

1) Establish domicile as provided in § [23.1-502](#) and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) domicile guidelines.

2) Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or equivalent state financial aid application.

3) Make satisfactory academic progress as defined by the institution for the purposes of eligibility under Title IV of the federal Higher Education Act, as amended.

b) Waivers and related stipends under this section are limited to a certificate or associate degree at a public two-year institution and certificate or first bachelor's degree at a public four-year institution of higher education. Eligibility is restricted to a combined total of no more than four years or its equivalent.

c) 1) Waivers granted under this section shall cover the last-dollar cost of the in-state undergraduate tuition, mandatory Education & General Program (E & G) fees and mandatory non-E & G fees after applying, in the following order: (i) all federal aid under 38 USC Part III dollar-for-dollar; (ii) all state grants and scholarships dollar-for-dollar; and (iii) a proportion of all federal gift aid (Pell) and expected family contribution (EFC) or its equivalent under FAFSA Simplification as determined by SCHEV.

2) The proportion in c)1) (iii) shall be determined by SCHEV based on undergraduate tuition, mandatory Education & General Program (E & G) fees and mandatory non-E & G fees as a percentage of the total cost of attendance.

3) Mandatory non-E & G fees in c) 1) are fees charged to all students regardless of degree program or as defined by SCHEV. Mandatory non-E & G fees do not include room and board.

d) Students enrolled in the Program in 2023-2024 or who formally committed to the institution to enroll in Summer or Fall 2024 courses by May 15, 2024 shall not be subject to the provisions of a) 1), b), c) 1) and c) 2) of this section.

c. PAYMENTS TO CITIZEN MEMBERS OF NONLEGISLATIVE BODIES:

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, executive branch agencies shall not pay compensation to citizen members of boards, commissions, authorities, councils, or other bodies from any fund for the performance of such members' duties in the work of the board, commission, authority, council, or other body.

d. VIRGINIA BIRTH-RELATED NEUROLOGICAL INJURY COMPENSATION PROGRAM

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Virginia Birth-Related Neurological Injury Compensation Program is authorized to require each admitted claimant's parent or legal guardian to purchase private health insurance (the "primary payer") to provide coverage for the actual medically necessary and reasonable expenses as described in Virginia Code § [38.2-5009\(A\)\(1\)](#) that were, or are, incurred as a result of the admitted claimant's birth-related neurological injury and for the admitted claimant's benefit. Provided, however, that the Program shall reimburse, upon receipt of proof of payment, solely the portion of the premiums that is attributable to the admitted claimant's post-admission coverage from the effective date of this provision forward and paid for by the admitted claimant's parent or legal guardian.



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Executive Department

EXECUTIVE DIRECTIVE SEVEN (2024)

ADDRESSING CHANGES TO THE VIRGINIA MILITARY SURVIVORS AND DEPENDENTS EDUCATION PROGRAM

By virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, I hereby issue this Executive Directive to create a stakeholder-driven task force to review the General Assembly's recent program eligibility changes to the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program and to help inform the development of guidance and other materials that minimize the impact on military and veteran families to the greatest extent possible. Additionally, the task force will consider further program changes and provide recommendations to address any unintended consequences of the reforms recently passed by the General Assembly.

Importance of the Initiative

As Commander in Chief of the Commonwealth's armed forces, I value our military and the sacrifices our brave men and women make to protect our freedoms. I am committed to ensuring veterans and their families have state-supported programs that meet their needs and to provide opportunities that keep Virginia the most military and veteran friendly state in the nation.

Established in 1996, the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP) is an educational assistance program that provides a waiver of tuition and mandatory fees to qualified survivors and dependents if the military service member was killed, became missing in action, became a prisoner of war, or has 90 percent or more service-related disability. This program honors the selfless sacrifice of our service members by providing financial resources to assist survivors and dependents in attaining their educational goals. We must continue to explore ways to support and sustain this important program.

The 2024 Appropriation Act includes \$40 million to support institutional costs related to their VMSDEP waiver, providing general fund support to the waiver component for the first time, and \$19.4 million in stipends, a 26 percent increase over the current budget for that aspect of the program. Although the budget starting on July 1, 2024 includes historic VMSDEP investments, it also contains significant program eligibility changes to the VMSDEP waiver component made by the General Assembly. This includes defining program eligibility to undergraduate programs, individuals domiciled in Virginia, and students making satisfactory academic progress, as well as requiring participants to utilize certain other benefits for which they may be eligible. **Additionally, currently enrolled participants and those formally committed to an institution for summer or fall of this year by May 15, 2024, are grandfathered in and not subject to these changes.**

In recent years, changes that made more individuals eligible for VMSDEP and increased awareness of the program have led to exponential program growth. Over the last five years, program

enrollment at our public institutions of higher education has increased by 341 percent from 1,385 students in 2018-19 to 6,107 students in 2022-23. Similarly, costs have also increased over the same period by 444 percent, from \$11.9 million to \$64.8 million. At current growth rates, the program is projected to enroll over 18,000 students in 2025-26, totaling more than \$180 million in tuition and fees waivers.

The costs of the VMSDEP waivers have historically been borne by our state-supported institutions of higher education.¹ This expense is mitigated by increasing tuition and fees for tuition-paying students.²

To address institutions' concerns about the rapidly rising costs of the VMSDEP and to ensure its long-term sustainability, the General Assembly advanced significant program eligibility changes in its March 7, 2024 Conference Report. I offered an amendment to create a work group comprised of veterans and other stakeholders to evaluate and make recommendations on future legislative actions and budgetary modifications that could improve the program's long-term viability. Although the final budget did not include the study, we have the opportunity to continue the effort by establishing a task force to guide the State Council of Higher Education of Virginia's implementation of the budget language and look at further reforms to support the sustainability and availability of this program.

Students receiving the VMSDEP waiver in 2023-24 or who formally committed to an institution to enroll in summer or fall 2024 courses by May 15, 2024, will not be impacted by the General Assembly's program eligibility changes. Students who enroll after this date are subject to the new requirements; however, those requirements could change based on recommendations of this task force and future actions by next year's General Assembly ahead of 2025 enrollment.

Although the General Assembly's program eligibility changes are a good-faith effort to ensure the sustainability of VMSDEP for our military families, I have heard from General Assembly members from both sides of the aisle that some of these changes may result in unintended consequences and that the efforts to ensure the long-term health of the program and the preservation of the waiver program would greatly benefit from thorough public engagement with our veteran community, especially our Gold Star families.

We can work together to ensure the General Assembly's program eligibility changes do not disrupt our military families any more than necessary and work together to explore changes for the General Assembly to consider.

Directive

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority vested in me as the Chief Executive Officer of the Commonwealth, and pursuant to Article V of the Constitution of Virginia and the laws of the Commonwealth, I direct the State Council of Higher Education of Virginia, in coordination with the Secretary of Education, Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, and the Department of Veterans Services, to take the following actions:

¹ *FA22: Financial aid by program.* (n.d.). Retrieved May 15, 2024, from https://research.schev.edu/fair/fa22_report.asp.

² Hood, M. (2024, April 5). Potential changes for Virginia military families when it comes to paying for education. *13News Now*. Retrieved May 15, 2024, from <https://www.13newsnow.com/article/news/national/military-news/potential-changes-for-virginia-military-families-to-paying-for-education/291-57df8b85-10d5-4119-8eac-9232c04078b4>.

1. As soon as practicable, form a task force consisting of veterans, Gold Star families, members of the General Assembly, and public institutions of higher education. The task force shall include members representing various branches of the U.S. armed forces, the Virginia National Guard, and public four-year and two-year institutions.
2. Convene the task force described in (1) for no fewer than two in-person meetings to review the VMSDEP changes at § 4-5.01(b)(7) from Chapter 2 of the 2024 Special Session I, Acts of Assembly, and solicit input on how to develop new guidance that minimizes the impact of the changes on military families and instructs public institutions of higher education on how to implement the changes. The guidance shall clearly state that the grandfather clause at § 4-5.01(b)(7)(d) applies for the duration of the student's enrollment in his or her program of study, or the student's four years of program eligibility is exhausted, whichever comes first.
3. Publish materials, such as frequently asked questions documents and other resources, that communicate the VMSDEP changes described in (2) to the various stakeholder groups, including military families, public institutions of higher education, school divisions, and the General Assembly.
4. Based on feedback from the task force described in (2), identify potential changes to the eligibility language at § 4-5.01(b)(7) that could be considered for future action by the General Assembly. In considering program changes, the task force shall balance the need for long-term program sustainability with eliminating unreasonable barriers to the VMSDEP waiver or a survivor or dependent's educational goals.

Effective Date

This Executive Directive shall be effective upon its signing and shall remain in force and effect unless amended or rescinded by further executive order or directive. Given under my hand and under the Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia, this 15th day of May 2024.




Glenn Youngkin, Governor

Attest:


Kelly Gee, Secretary of the Commonwealth

For Immediate Release: May 24, 2024

Contacts: Office of the Governor: Christian Martinez,
Christian.Martinez@governor.virginia.gov

Governor Glenn Youngkin Announces First Meeting Date and Members of “Preserving Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program Task Force”

RICHMOND, VA - Following his issuance of [Executive Directive Seven](#), which established a task force to address recent changes made by the General Assembly to the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP), Governor Glenn Youngkin today announced the first meeting date of the Task Force.

The Preserving VMSDEP Task Force’s first meeting will be held on June 10th at the Virginia War Memorial from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm. After opening remarks and staff presentations on the program and changes enacted in the budget, the Task Force will take public comment. RSVP to attend or receive information about remote participation options at PreservingVMSDEP@governor.virginia.gov.

“I am proud that so many Virginians, especially the many veterans who have already reached out to volunteer on behalf of our military families and all Virginians, are coming together to offer solutions to help preserve and sustain this important program for the future,” **said Governor Glenn Youngkin**. “The Task Force will give stakeholders a venue to provide important information on the program, express their concerns and offer feedback on implementation guidance and suggestions for changes.”

The Administration has invited General Assembly members to formally participate in the Task Force and is coordinating with General Assembly leadership to determine the representatives.

Virginians who wish to participate by providing feedback to the Task Force ahead of the June 10th meeting should contact PreservingVMSDEP@governor.virginia.gov.

The Task Force will be co-chaired by Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs Craig Crenshaw, a retired Major General in the United States Marine Corps, and Secretary of Education Aimee Rogstad Guidera. Lieutenant Governor Winsome Earle-Sears, Attorney General Jason Miyares, and their offices will participate in the Task Force's work.

The Task Force will also include:

- General John P. Jumper (USAF, Ret.), Chairman-elect of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) and 17th Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force
- President William G. Kelly, Christopher Newport University, a retired Rear Admiral of the United States Coast Guard
- Commissioner Charles "Chuck" Zingler, Department of Veterans Services, a retired U.S. Navy Captain
- **Monti Zimmerman, Vice-Chairman of the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations** and Virginia National Guard Association
- Director A. Scott Fleming, SCHEV
- President Michael Rao, Virginia Commonwealth University
- Deborah Dickerson, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, George Mason University
- President Corey McCray, Paul D. Camp Community College, a Navy veteran
- Dr. Daniel Gade, Board of Visitors, Christopher Newport University, a retired Army Lieutenant Colonel
- **Katherine Martinez, Student Veterans of America**
- Robert "Bob" Eisiminger, Member, Board of Veterans Services
- Mike Flanagan, COL, USA (ret.)
- Tim Pillion, Board Member, Virginia Veterans Services Foundation
- David J. DePippo, Quartermaster, Second Class (QM2), USCG.
- Sarah Ross Geisen, Drew Ross Memorial Foundation
- Bre Kingsbury, Navy League of Hampton Roads
- Kayla Owen, Friends of VMSDEP
- Kristen Fenty, Friends of VMSDEP and Gold Star Spouse
- Donna Lewis, Friends of VMSDEP and Gold Star Spouse
- Caitlin Goodale-Porter, Coast Guard Veteran