

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2025-2026 SIMULATION SESSION

SENATE BILL

NO 27

Introduced by Senator Grove  
(co-sponsored by Senator Blakespear)

October 1, 2025

An act to expand educational benefit access to dependents of veterans.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

SB 27, as introduced, Grove. Military and Veterans Affairs: Dependent Verification for Education Benefits

Existing law, as administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, permits veteran dependents to receive education benefits provided they issue proper documentation supplied by the veteran parent. Such documentation includes but is not limited to discharge paperwork, the dependent’s birth certificate, and the dependent’s social security number. Current federal regulations also require a submission of VA Form 21-686c (Declaration of Status of Dependents), a form that is required to be signed in order to certify the relationship between a dependent and a veteran and to confirm the dependent’s benefit eligibility.

Current federal regulations surrounding benefits of which dependents of veterans receive fail to address non-traditional circumstances in which the veteran may be uncooperative, unavailable, or estranged from the dependent(s).

It is the intent of California’s Legislature to ensure that veteran dependents are offered an alternative avenue to verify their eligibility in order to receive dependent benefits without being restricted by an uncooperative, unavailable, or estranged parent.

This bill would authorize California State agencies dispersing veteran’s benefits, such as the California College Fee Waiver Program, to accept alternative forms of verification for children of veterans to certify their dependency. Alternative forms of verification will include a valid birth certificate, and a court ordered declaration of guardianship or custody. This bill would also ensure that Californian children of veterans have access to affordable education through state administered benefits.

Vote: majority  
Program: no

Appropriation: no

Fiscal Committee: no

Local

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

**SECTION 1. Legislative Findings and Declarations.**

(a) Children of veterans are often eligible for grants, scholarships, and educational fee waivers, including the California College Fee Waiver Program,

(b) Where without VA Form 21-686c signed by the veteran parent, dependents lose access to benefits including educational assistance when they would otherwise be considered eligible,

(c) Where changes proposed to California's Military and Veteran Code would allow newly eligible dependents to qualify for educational fee assistance through the California College Fee Waiver Program when attending all California Community Colleges, California State Universities, and University of California campuses.

**SEC. 2. Program Administration**

(a) Section 99901 is added to California's Military and Veteran Code to read as follows:

(1) For the purposes of receiving state administered veteran's dependent benefits, the child of a veteran shall be deemed an eligible dependent if a parent-child relationship is defined by the following documents:

(2) A certified copy of the child's birth certificate

(3) A court ordered declaration of guardianship or custody

(b) All agencies administering veteran's dependent benefits shall update application materials and requirements to reflect Section 99901 listed above.

(c) All agencies administering veteran's dependent benefits shall clearly inform applicants of the changes made to the application process, materials, and requirements.

SEC. 3. This bill shall take immediate effect upon its chartering.