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# Senate Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness Committee

Senator Lisa Baker, Chair

Diane McNaughton, Executive Director

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## **BILL SUMMARY**

### **Senate Bill 1488, Printer's No. 2115**

### **Prime Sponsor: Sen. Lisa Baker**

#### **SUMMARY:**

This bill extends the tuition voucher benefit to the children of soldiers killed in action, even when the soldier was not a Pennsylvania resident at the time of death. This bill may help the children of a Guardsman killed in Afghanistan last summer. Although he had once been a resident of PA, he had moved to Georgia. Two distinct statutes relate to PA's tuition benefit—Section 3503 of Title 51 (Military Affairs), and this act, as amended, administered by the PA Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA).

#### **EXISTING LAW:**

This bill amends the Police Officer, Firefighter, Correction Employee and National Guard Member Child Beneficiary Education Act, which provides for a postsecondary educational gratuity program. This is a free-standing act enacted in 1998. This law waives tuition, costs and fees at all PA state-owned colleges, trade schools and community colleges.

#### **ANALYSIS:**

Last year, a Guardsman was killed in Afghanistan, but he may not technically have been a resident of Pennsylvania at the time of his death. This bill ensures that his children and spouse---along with children in similar circumstances --are eligible to apply for the educational benefit to which other Pennsylvania children of fallen soldiers are entitled.

In the past ten years, only two children have been affected by this residency issue, according to the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA).

This bill is strongly supported by the DMVA.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:**

This act will take effect immediately. Its provisions are retroactive to September 11, 2001.