

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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130th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2021

Legislative Document

No. 1297

H.P. 953

House of Representatives, March 30, 2021

**An Act To Provide Educational Opportunities for Family Members
of Deceased Veterans, First Responders and Health Care Workers**

Reference to the Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative BROOKS of Lewiston.
Cosponsored by Senator LIBBY of Androscoggin and
Representatives: CLOUTIER of Lewiston, CRAVEN of Lewiston, DUNPHY of Old Town,
Speaker FECTEAU of Biddeford, Senator: CLAXTON of Androscoggin.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA c. 441** is enacted to read:

3 **CHAPTER 441**

4 **EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY GRANT PROGRAM FOR FAMILY**
5 **MEMBERS OF DECEASED VETERANS, FIRST RESPONDERS AND HEALTH**
6 **CARE WORKERS**

7 **§12941. Educational Opportunity Grant Program for Family Members of Deceased**
8 **Veterans, First Responders and Health Care Workers**

9 **1. Definitions.** As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, the
10 following terms have the following meanings.

11 A. "Authority" means the Finance Authority of Maine.

12 B. "First responder" has the same meaning as in Title 22, section 832-A, subsection 1,
13 paragraph E.

14 C. "Fund" means the Educational Opportunity Grant Program for Family Members of
15 Deceased Veterans, First Responders and Health Care Workers Fund under section
16 12942.

17 D. "Program" means the Educational Opportunity Grant Program for Family Members
18 of Deceased Veterans, First Responders and Health Care Workers under subsection 2.

19 E. "Public postsecondary educational institution" means the University of Maine
20 System, the Maine Community College System or the Maine Maritime Academy.

21 **2. Program.** The Educational Opportunity Grant Program for Family Members of
22 Deceased Veterans, First Responders and Health Care Workers is established within and
23 administered by the authority. The program provides a grant to an eligible person to cover
24 the cost of tuition, room and board, books and other required educational materials and
25 other fees and expenses related to attending a public postsecondary educational institution
26 typically paid for by financial aid.

27 **3. Eligibility.** A person is eligible to receive a grant under the program if:

28 A. The person is a child or spouse of a veteran, first responder or health care worker
29 who during the course of employment as a military service member, first responder or
30 health care worker dies or contracts an illness or condition that leads to the death of the
31 veteran, first responder or health care worker;

32 B. The person or the deceased veteran, first responder or health care worker under
33 paragraph A is a resident of the State at the time of the death or contraction of the
34 illness or condition leading to the death of the veteran, first responder or health care
35 worker; and

36 C. The person is accepted to a course of study in a public postsecondary educational
37 institution.

1 **4. Number of grants allowed.** A person eligible under subsection 3 may receive a
2 grant under the program for every semester the person is eligible until the person receives
3 a degree from a public postsecondary educational institution.

4 **5. Funding.** The program is funded by the fund.

5 **6. Rules.** The authority shall adopt rules to carry out the purposes of this chapter.
6 Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined by Title 5,
7 chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

8 **§12942. Educational Opportunity Grant Program for Family Members of Deceased**
9 **Veterans, First Responders and Health Care Workers Fund**

10 The Educational Opportunity Grant Program for Family Members of Deceased
11 Veterans, First Responders and Health Care Workers Fund is established within and
12 administered by the authority to fund grants under and administer the program. The fund
13 is funded by appropriations, allocations or grants or donations by public or private sources,
14 including a resource for postsecondary student financial aid that is related to a service or
15 profession of the deceased parent or spouse under section 12941, subsection 3, paragraph
16 A. The authority may engage in the solicitation of a grant or donation to be deposited into
17 the fund. The authority shall deposit with the Treasurer of State to the credit of the fund
18 money in the fund not currently needed by the authority to carry out the purposes of the
19 fund, which may be invested as provided by law. Interest earned on investment of money
20 under this section must be credited to the fund. Balances in the fund do not lapse but must
21 be carried over to the next fiscal year. The authority may use principal of the fund to pay
22 for the authority's reasonable expenses in administering the fund.

23 **SUMMARY**

24 This bill creates the Educational Opportunity Grant Program for Family Members of
25 Deceased Veterans, First Responders and Health Care Workers, administered by the
26 Finance Authority of Maine, to provide postsecondary education grants to eligible children
27 and spouses of veterans, first responders and health care workers who die or contract a
28 condition or illness that leads to their death. The program is funded by a fund that may
29 accept appropriations, allocations, grants or donations from public and private sources,
30 including financial aid resources, and the authority may solicit private donations for the
31 fund.