

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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SENATE BILL 1004

Short Title: Family Support for Those Who Serve Act. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Sawrey, Jones, and Barnes (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

May 4, 2026

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO EXPAND TUITION WAIVERS TO THE CHILDREN OF CERTAIN PUBLIC
SAFETY EMPLOYEES FOR ENROLLMENT IN NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY
COLLEGES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1.(a) G.S. 115B-1 reads as rewritten:

"§ 115B-1. Definitions.

The following definitions apply in this Chapter:

- (1) Correctional officer. – An employee of an employer who is certified as a State correctional officer under the provisions of Article 1 of Chapter 17C of the General Statutes.
- ~~(1a)~~(2) Employer. – The State of North Carolina and its departments, agencies, and institutions; or a county, city, town, or other political subdivision of the State.
- (3) Experienced correctional officer. – A correctional officer with at least 10 years of service as a correctional officer in North Carolina.
- ~~(2)~~(4) Firefighter or volunteer firefighter. – The same as provided in G.S. 58-86-25 for "eligible firemen".
- ~~(3)~~(5) Law enforcement officer. – An employee or volunteer of an employer who possesses the power of arrest, who has taken the law enforcement oath administered under the authority of the State as prescribed by G.S. 11-11, and who is certified as a law enforcement officer under the provisions of Article 1 of Chapter 17C of the General Statutes or certified as a deputy sheriff under the provisions of Chapter 17E of the General Statutes. "Law enforcement officer" also means the sheriff of the county.
- ~~(4)~~(6) Permanently and totally disabled as a direct result of a traumatic injury sustained in the line of duty. – A person: (i) who as a law enforcement officer, correctional officer, firefighter, volunteer firefighter, or rescue squad worker suffered a disabling injury while in active service or training for active service, (ii) who at the time of active service or training was a North Carolina resident, and (iii) who has been determined to be permanently and totally disabled for compensation purposes by the North Carolina Industrial Commission.
- ~~(5)~~(7) Rescue squad worker. – The same as provided in G.S. 58-86-30 for "eligible rescue squad worker".
- ~~(6)~~(8) Survivor. – Any person whose parent, legal guardian, legal custodian, or spouse: (i) was a law enforcement officer, a correctional officer, a firefighter, a volunteer firefighter, or a rescue squad worker, (ii) was killed while in active



1 service or training for active service or died as a result of a service-connected
2 disability, and (iii) at the time of active service or training was a North
3 Carolina resident. The term does not include the widow or widower of a law
4 enforcement officer, correctional officer, firefighter, volunteer firefighter, or
5 a rescue squad worker if the widow or widower has remarried.

6 ~~(7)~~(9) Tuition. – The amount charged for registering for a credit hour of instruction
7 and shall not be construed to mean any other fees or charges or costs of
8 textbooks."

9 **SECTION 1.(b)** G.S. 115B-2 reads as rewritten:

10 **"§ 115B-2. Tuition waiver authorized.**

11 (a) The constituent institutions of The University of North Carolina and the community
12 colleges as defined in G.S. 115D-2(2) shall permit the following persons to attend classes for
13 credit or noncredit purposes without the required payment of tuition:

14 (1) Repealed by Session Laws 2009-451, s. 8.11(a), effective July 1, 2009.

15 (2) Any person who is the survivor of a law enforcement officer, correctional
16 officer, firefighter, volunteer firefighter, or rescue squad worker killed as a
17 direct result of a traumatic injury sustained in the line of duty.

18 (3) The spouse of a law enforcement officer, correctional officer, firefighter,
19 volunteer firefighter, or rescue squad worker who is permanently and totally
20 disabled as a direct result of a traumatic injury sustained in the line of duty.

21 (4) Any child, if the child is at least 17 years old but not yet 24 years old, whose
22 parent, legal guardian, or legal custodian is a law enforcement officer,
23 correctional officer, firefighter, volunteer firefighter, or rescue squad worker
24 who is permanently and totally disabled as a direct result of a traumatic injury
25 sustained in the line of duty. However, a child's eligibility for a waiver of
26 tuition under this Chapter shall not exceed: (i) 54 months, if the child is
27 seeking a baccalaureate degree, or (ii) if the child is not seeking a
28 baccalaureate degree, the number of months required to complete the
29 educational program to which the child is applying.

30 ...

31 (a1) The community colleges, as defined in G.S. 115D-2(2), shall permit any child, if the
32 child is at least 17 years old but not yet 24 years old, whose parent, legal guardian, or legal
33 custodian is a law enforcement officer, experienced correctional officer, or firefighter to attend
34 classes for credit or noncredit purposes without the required payment of tuition. However, a
35 child's eligibility for a waiver of tuition under this Chapter shall not exceed the number of months
36 required to complete the educational program to which the child is applying.

37 (b) ~~Persons eligible for the tuition waiver under subsection (a) waivers under subsections~~
38 ~~(a) and (a1) of this section must meet admission and other standards considered appropriate by~~
39 ~~the educational institution. In addition, the constituent institutions of The University of North~~
40 ~~Carolina shall accept these persons only on a space available basis."~~

41 **SECTION 2.** This act is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with
42 the 2026-2027 academic year.