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News Release

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Veterans Education Bill passes Senate

MONTGOMERY – The Senate on Thursday unanimously passed an education bill that will extend benefits to children and spouses of Alabama’s Veterans.

The bill increases the Alabama G.I. Dependents’ Scholarship Program from eight to ten semesters for children, and from four to six semesters for spouses of Veterans who have a VA-rated disability of 20% or greater; were killed in the line of duty; were declared an MIA or a former POW. The bill also increases the scholarship’s expiration date by one year.

“We literally and figuratively weathered the storm yesterday,” said Clyde Marsh, commissioner of the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs. “The Veterans education bill has been a long time coming, and I applaud the State Legislature for their diligence in moving the bill to its final passage.”

Enacted into law in 1951, the Alabama G.I. Dependents’ Scholarship pays for the dependents’ tuition, books and instructional fees at any state supported college or technical school. The scholarship is funded through the Alabama Education Trust Fund and is administered by the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs.

The state VA department is also optimistic about a pending veterans cemetery bill that will allow for the construction of a state operated veterans cemetery near Spanish Fort and the historic Fort Blakeley State Park. The National Cemetery Administration in February approved the ADVA’s pre-application for a federal grant estimated at \$7.6 million. If passed, the legislation will allow the state VA to secure the grant for the design and construction of the cemetery that will serve some 71,000 veterans in southwest Alabama.

