

I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan
BILL STATUS

BILL NO.	SPONSOR	TITLE	DATE INTRODUCED	DATE REFERRED	CMTE REFERRED	FISCAL NOTES	PUBLIC HEARING DATE	DATE COMMITTEE REPORT FILED	NOTES
202-38 (COR)	Vincent A. V. Borja Frank F. Blas, Jr. Shelly V. Calvo Sabrina Salas Matanane Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao Tina Rose Muña Barnes	AN ACT TO <i>ADD</i> A NEW CHAPTER 56 TO DIVISION 5 OF TITLE 17, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO ESTABLISHING THE "GUAM VETERANS HIGHER EDUCATION BENEFITS ACT."	10/9/25 11:43 a.m. ^10/20/25 11:40 a.m.						

I MINA'TRENTAI OCHO NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN
2025 (FIRST) Regular Session

Bill No. 202-38(COR)

Introduced by:

Vincent A. V. Borja 
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**AN ACT TO ADD A NEW CHAPTER 56 TO DIVISION 5
OF TITLE 17, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE
TO ESTABLISHING THE “GUAM VETERANS HIGHER
EDUCATION BENEFITS ACT.”**

1 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF GUAM:**

2 **Section 1. Legislative Findings and Intent.** *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* finds that
3 the people of Guam owe a profound debt of gratitude to the veterans who entered
4 the U.S. Armed Forces from Guam, and to their spouses and dependents, for their
5 distinguished service and immense sacrifice. While federal educational assistance
6 programs provide valuable support, it is the finding of this body that the
7 establishment of a distinctly local benefits program is a moral imperative that
8 demonstrates Guam’s unwavering commitment to honoring and supporting its
9 veterans and their families.

10 *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* further finds that, with a significant veteran population
11 residing on Guam, many of whom, along with their families, encounter substantial
12 financial obstacles to accessing higher education, it is in the public interest to remove
13 such barriers. Providing these educational benefits is not merely an act of gratitude

1 but a strategic investment in the intellectual capital and economic prosperity of our
2 island. By enhancing access to higher education at the University of Guam and the
3 Guam Community College, this Act will directly contribute to a more skilled and
4 capable workforce, fostering economic growth and ensuring our veterans and their
5 families can achieve their full potential.

6 Therefore, it is the express purpose of this Act to establish the “Guam
7 Veterans Higher Education Benefits Act.” This legislation is designed to provide
8 meaningful tuition assistance, modeled after effective programs such as the Texas
9 Hazlewood Act, yet carefully tailored to the fiscal and institutional framework of
10 Guam. It is the intent of this Legislature that the Act be implemented without
11 requiring new appropriations, by leveraging existing institutional capacities for
12 tuition waivers at the University of Guam and the Guam Community College.

13 **Section 2.** A *new* Chapter 56 is added to Division 5 of Title 17, Guam Code
14 Annotated, to read as follows:

15 “Chapter 56

16 Guam Veterans Higher Education Benefits Act.

17 § 56101. Short Title.

18 § 56102. Definitions.

19 § 56103. Educational Benefits.

20 § 56104. Eligibility Requirements and Limitations.

21 § 56105. Administration.

22 § 56106. Implementation.

23 **§ 56101. Short Title.**

24 This Chapter shall be known as the “Guam Veterans Higher Education
25 Benefits Act”

26 **§ 56102. Definitions.**

27 As used in this Chapter, the following terms shall mean:

1 (a) “Commission” means the Commission on Post-Secondary
2 Education

3 (b) “Dependent” means:

4 (1) A spouse; or

5 (2) A child who:

6 a. Is 25 years old or younger on the first day of the
7 semester or term for which the exemption is claimed;
8 and

9 b. Was claimed as a dependent on a federal income tax
10 return filed for the preceding year

11 (c) “Qualifying Veteran” means a person who:

12 (1) At the time of entry into the U.S. Armed Forces, was a
13 resident of Guam or officially declared Guam as their home
14 of record;

15 (2) Received an honorable discharge from military service;

16 (3) Completed a minimum of one hundred eighty-one (181)
17 days of active duty service, exclusive of any time spent in
18 basic training;

19 (4) Is a legal resident of Guam at the time of application for
20 benefits under this Chapter; and

21 (5) Meets at least one (1) of the following criteria:

22 a. Served on active duty during a period of war or armed
23 conflict as officially designated by the United States
24 Congress;

25 b. Was killed in action;

26 c. Died while in service;

27 d. Is officially listed as missing in action;

1 e. Has been determined to be totally and permanently
2 disabled for the purpose of unemployability by the
3 U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; or

4 f. Has a service-connected disability rating of no less
5 than thirty percent (30%) as determined by the U.S.
6 Department of Veterans Affairs.

7 (d) "Institution" shall mean the University of Guam and the Guam
8 Community College.

9 (e) "Tuition" shall mean the fees charged by an institution for
10 enrollment in a course, but does not include any other fees,
11 charges, or costs, such as student activity fees, laboratory fees, or
12 the cost of books and instructional materials.

13 **§ 56103. Educational Benefits.**

14 (a) The following persons, subject to the requirements and limitations of this
15 Chapter, shall be exempt from the payment of tuition at an Institution:

16 (1) Qualifying veterans; and

17 (2) Dependent children or spouses of qualifying veterans

18 (b) The tuition exemption provided under this Chapter:

19 (1) At the undergraduate level, shall not exceed a lifetime total of
20 ninety (90) credit hours per Qualifying Veteran, which may be
21 used by the veteran or allocated to one (1) or more eligible
22 dependents. No individual may receive more than eighteen (18)
23 credit hours of tuition exemption per academic semester

24 (2) At the graduate level, shall not exceed a lifetime total of thirty (30)
25 credit hours. Such exemption shall be limited to master's degree
26 programs, except that professional doctoral programs may qualify

1 if designated by the Commission on Post-Secondary Education as a
2 critical workforce shortage area;

3 (3) Shall apply only to charges for tuition as defined in §56102(e) and
4 shall not cover student fees, laboratory charges, instructional
5 materials, or other incidental costs;

6 (4) Shall not be applied to repeated courses beyond one additional
7 attempt;

8 (5) Shall be contingent upon space being available in a course after all
9 tuition-paying students have completed registration; and

10 (6) Shall only be available to a Qualifying Veteran or their dependent
11 after all applicable federal veterans' educational benefits providing
12 tuition assistance have been fully exhausted.

13 **§ 56104. Eligibility Requirements and Limitations.**

14 (a) To be eligible for and to maintain benefits under this Chapter, a person
15 must:

16 (1) Be admitted and enrolled at an Institution;

17 (2) Maintain satisfactory academic progress toward a degree or
18 certificate program, as defined by the policies of the respective
19 Institution, and possess a cumulative grade point average of no
20 less than 2.5 for undergraduate programs and 3.0 for graduate
21 programs;

22 (3) Attest that they have exhausted all eligibility for any federal
23 veterans' educational benefits that provide tuition assistance
24 prior to receiving a waiver under this Chapter; and

25 (4) Not be in default on any student loan made or guaranteed by
26 the government of Guam;

1 (b) Benefits conferred by this Chapter shall be subject to the following
2 limitations:

3 (1) The provision of a tuition exemption shall be contingent upon
4 space being available in a course after all tuition-paying
5 students have completed registration;

6 (2) This Chapter does not guarantee admission into any academic
7 program, course, or Institution;

8 (3) The benefit is subject to all course capacity limits and program
9 enrollment restrictions established by the Institution;

10 (4) A tuition exemption shall not be granted for any course that has
11 reached its maximum enrollment capacity or for which a
12 waitlist of tuition-paying students exists.

13 **§ 56105. Administration.**

14 (a) The Commission shall promulgate such rules and regulations as are
15 necessary for the administration of this Chapter. The University of Guam
16 and the Guam Community College shall establish and amend internal
17 policies and administrative procedures as required to ensure full
18 compliance with the provisions of this Chapter.

19 (b) The government of Guam entity responsible for veterans affairs shall
20 provide necessary assistance in the verification of a veteran's status,
21 service record, and eligibility for benefits under this Chapter upon request
22 by an Institution.

23 **§ 56106. Implementation.**

24 (a) The benefits prescribed by this Chapter shall be implemented and
25 provided by the University of Guam and the Guam Community College
26 through a tuition waiver mechanism;

1 **(b) It is the express intent of the Legislature that the implementation of this**
2 **Chapter shall require no additional appropriation from the General Fund.**
3 **The costs associated with the tuition exemptions shall be absorbed by the**
4 **Institutions as a civic and public duty.**

5 **(c) The University of Guam and the Guam Community College shall each:**

6 **(1) Develop and publish clear procedures for the application and**
7 **processing of tuition exemptions consistent with institutional**
8 **enrollment timelines and course availability;**

9 **(2) Submit a report to *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* no later than ninety (90)**
10 **days after the end of each academic year, detailing the number of**
11 **beneficiaries served, the total number of credit hours exempted, and**
12 **the calculated value of the tuition waived;**

13 **(3) Implement control measures to ensure that the granting of**
14 **exemptions under this Chapter does not result in the displacement**
15 **of any tuition-paying student from any course or program.**

16 **Section 3. Severability.** If any provision of this Act or its application to any
17 person or circumstance is found to be invalid or contrary to law, such invalidity
18 shall not affect other provisions or applications of this Act that can be given effect
19 without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of the
20 provisions of this Act are severable

21 **Section 4. Effective Date.** This Act shall become effective upon enactment.