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Gov. Wolf Highlights PA GI Bill Legacy Providing Military Families with Higher Education

State College, PA – Governor Tom Wolf today celebrated the success of his PA GI Bill, also known as the Military Family Education Program (MFEP), which allows members of the Pennsylvania National Guard (PNG) to earn college benefits for their spouse and children. The PA GI Bill was the first program of its kind in the nation when he signed it into law on July 1, 2019 and now has more than 3,300 dependents of Pennsylvania Army and Air Guard members enrolled for the opportunity to receive free or low cost higher education.

“The PA National Guard is one of the largest, hardest working national guards in the nation. Whether it is foreign or domestic – peacekeeping missions or a pandemic – these dedicated service members never fail when it comes to serving our commonwealth and this nation,” said Gov. Wolf. “The backbone of the Pennsylvania National Guard is their families. It was imperative that Pennsylvania reward these soldiers and airmen by securing the future of their spouses and children, adding to a better quality of life for everyone.”

The PA GI Bill is a program that provides an education benefit that National Guard members can earn to transfer to their spouse or children if the service member reenlists for an additional six years of service.

The program provides for 10 semesters of no or reduced cost education for family member(s). The benefit must be used at a Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) approved educational institution, and at the tuition rate set by the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE).

The PA GI Bill enables PNG members to transfer education benefits or defer the benefit by designating eligible beneficiaries up to the time that they complete their Guard service. And spouses will be eligible to use the educational benefit immediately or up to six years after the service member separates from the Guard.

Since the program began on July 1, 2019, 2,879 Pennsylvania Army and Air Guard members have enrolled in the program, and they have registered 3,357 of their dependents into the program.

“Our military families support their soldiers and airmen during many times of absence. Thanks to the PA GI Bill, they are now able to plan for a higher education without wondering if they will be able to afford the tuition,” said Maj. Gen. Mark Schindler, Pennsylvania’s adjutant general and head of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. “Through this one-of-a-kind program, we have improved retention, strengthened our readiness and improved the quality of life for our National Guard family members.”

“Since my wife and I are both enlisted in the Pennsylvania Air National Guard, we have education benefits available to us. It was an easy decision to reenlist for another six years so that our 1-year-old son can use the Military Family Education Program in the future,” said Staff Sgt. Kiara Rivera-Coia. “This education benefit has helped give both of us peace of mind knowing our son will have options available to him when the time comes for him to attend college.”

“The Pennsylvania GI Bill is the kind of legislation that made me want to serve in the Senate,” said Senator Lindsey Williams. “I’ve heard from National Guard Members who have taken advantage of this program over the last few years and this educational investment is helping their families achieve their dreams. I’m so proud to have been the prime co-sponsor of the legislation that created the Pennsylvania GI Bill and I cannot wait to see the legacy of amazing work that these students create come to life. By honoring the commitment and service of our National Guard Members and their families today with an investment in their education, we’re creating the next generation of amazing Pennsylvanians.”

“Two years ago, the legislature worked together in a bipartisan effort to pass the PA GI Bill, part of our commitment to the men and women who serve in the Pa National Guard,” said state Rep. Scott Conklin. “The federal GI Bill has produced generations of leaders, including three presidents. Over time I believe we will see similar benefits with our state program – which will not only help our veterans get the education they need, but also in that the investments we make today in them will produce the leaders our state needs tomorrow. This is a wonderful program, and I am proud to have supported it.”

The PNG is the second largest National Guard in the nation with approximately 18,000 soldiers and airmen who reside in every county across the commonwealth.

PNG members are eligible for the [Education Assistance Program](#) with their initial service obligation of six years that provides them a non-transferable educational benefit.

To learn more about the PA GI Bill/MFEP visit <https://www.pa.ng.mil/education/Military-Family-Education-Program/>.

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