

SENATE BILL NO. 347

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Education and Health

on \_\_\_\_\_)

(Patron Prior to Substitute--Senator Reeves)

A BILL to direct the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, in collaboration with the Secretary of Education, to convene a stakeholder work group to evaluate and make recommendations on legislative actions and budgetary modifications that could improve the long-term viability of the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program.

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

1. § 1. The Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, in collaboration with the Secretary of Education, shall convene a stakeholder work group for the purpose of evaluating and making recommendations on legislative actions and budgetary modifications that could improve the long-term viability of the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (the Program). The work group shall consist of the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs or his designee, the Secretary of Education or his designee, the Director of the Department of Planning and Budget or his designee, a member of the Board of Veterans Services, a member of the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations, two current members of the General Assembly who were previously members of the General Assembly Military and Veterans Caucus, a beneficiary of the Program to be designated by the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, and representatives of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia and public institutions of higher education. The work group shall evaluate the history, current structure, and utilization trends of the Program and make recommendations on legislative actions and budgetary modifications that could be made to improve the stability and strength of the Program and ensure the Program's long-term viability. The Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs shall submit the work group's recommendations to the Governor and the Chairs of the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education and Health by October 1, 2024.