

# Fiscal Note

**BILL #** HB 2354

**TITLE:** tuition; family; post-traumatic stress; suicide

**SPONSOR:** Biasiucci

**STATUS:** House Engrossed

**PREPARED BY:** Lydia Chew

## Description

HB 2354 provides university and community college tuition waivers to surviving spouses and children of Arizona military servicemembers, veterans, peace officers, and firefighters with documented post-traumatic stress injuries who died by suicide.

## Estimated Impact

We estimate that individuals affected by HB 2354 would receive approximately \$300,000 each year in tuition waivers to Arizona public universities and community colleges.

The Arizona Board of Regents and the Arizona Community College Coordinating Council were unable to estimate the impact of this bill due to a lack of data.

## Analysis

*Table 1* displays the estimated number of persons affected by HB 2354. Based on 2020 Census Bureau data and May 2021 data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are currently 20,096 military servicemembers, 496,239 veterans, 12,740 peace officers, and 7,180 firefighters in Arizona. These numbers do not include former peace officers and firefighters. To the extent that spouses and children of former peace officers and firefighters seek tuition waivers under HB 2354, the impact of the bill may be higher.

	<u>Population</u>	<u>Death by Suicide Rate (Per 100,000)</u>	<u>Estimated #</u>	<u>Estimated # Spouses</u>	<u>Estimated # Children</u>
Military	20,096	28.7	6	3	0
Veterans	496,239	31.6	157	78	5
Peace Officers	12,740	17.0	2	1	0
Firefighters	<u>7,420</u>	18.0	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>536,495</b>		<b>166</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Estimated # of Persons Under HB 2354</b>				<b>88</b>	

(Continued)



According to the U.S. Department of Defense CY 2020 Annual Suicide Report, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs 2021 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report, and the Ruderman Family Foundation (a disability inclusion advocacy group) White Paper on Mental Health and Suicide of First Responders, rates of death by suicide for these groups are 28.7, 31.6, 17, and 18 per 100,000, respectively. Roughly 50% of military servicemembers are married and 3% have children between the ages of 19 and 22. Assuming that these percentages are similar for veterans, peace officers, and firefighters, we estimate that there are approximately 88 spouses and children that may receive tuition waivers under HB 2354.

For these individuals, HB 2354 would provide tuition waivers at any Arizona public university or community college. Based on the distribution of FY 2021 full-time student equivalent enrollment in the Arizona higher education system, we estimate that individuals would be split roughly evenly between attending universities and attending community colleges.

Before financial aid, annual tuition ranges from \$2,280 (Yavapai) to \$11,299 (UA). Assuming that the tuition waivers are applied after federal grants, we estimate that students would receive approximately \$300,000 in annual tuition waivers under HB 2354.

**Local Government Impact**

None

5/6/22