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## **Governor Wolf Introduces PA GI Bill, First Education Program to Support PA National Guard Member Families**

**Annville, PA** – Today at Fort Indiantown Gap, Governor Tom Wolf outlined the benefits of his proposed PA GI Bill that enables members of the Pennsylvania National Guard (PNG) to earn college benefits for their spouse and children. The PA GI Bill, or Military Family Education Program, would be the first program of its kind in the nation.

The governor was joined by Maj. Gen. Tony Carrelli, Pennsylvania's adjutant general and head of the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA), along with legislators, military members and their families.

"The PA GI Bill is designed to show that we not only appreciate our Pennsylvania National Guard members' service, but that we also acknowledge their families' support and sacrifice," Gov. Wolf said. "With the PA GI Bill, Pennsylvania can lead the way on a program I think we can all agree provides fitting support for our servicemembers and their families who endure great hardships through multiple overseas deployments, training exercises, and domestic emergencies in and outside of the commonwealth.

"This program will recognize the sacrifice of our Guard families by offering education benefits to Guard spouses and children in Pennsylvania schools."

The legislation will be sponsored by Senator Mike Regan, Senator Lindsey Williams, Representative Stephen Barrar, and Representative Chris Sainato.

"In order for us to maintain a strong National Guard over the next several decades, it is important that we retain these citizen soldiers beyond their first enlistment," said Sen. Mike Regan. "The Military Family Education Program will help in this cause."

"Pennsylvania's National Guard service members deserve this education credit for both themselves and their families, and I'm thrilled to support it," Sen. Williams said. "The Military Family Education Program is essential to retaining and attracting new National Guard service members."

“The families of our Pennsylvania National Guard personnel are to be commended for their daily support of their loved ones who serve their Commonwealth and country, and these family members deserve similar benefits bestowed by the provisions of our federal GI Bill to active duty military personnel,” Rep. Barrar said. “Therefore, I stand ready to partner in legislation to enhance our National Guard’s college tuition program by extending this state educational benefit to the spouse or child of our heroic Pennsylvania National Guard men and women.”

"The families of our Guard members sacrifice time with their loved ones for our benefit, so it is our duty to thank them with programs like the MEF that give military families every tool they need to seize the opportunities for success," said Rep. Sainato.

In addition to supporting military family members, this program would also improve PNG retention and strengthen its readiness. The PNG is the third largest National Guard in the nation with nearly 20,000 soldiers and airmen who reside in every county across the commonwealth.

“The PNG is comprised of highly trained soldiers and airmen who are experts in their specialty areas and are frequently called for federal or state duty. It’s critical to Pennsylvania and the nation that we retain these talented men and women,” said Carrelli. “This is a great re-enlistment incentive for these service members who are not only protecting commonwealth and country, but also want to secure a bright future for their family.”

The education benefit will be available to PNG members and existing service members transferring into the PNG who completed their initial military term and commit to an additional six years of PNG service. The program will provide for 10 semesters of tuition-free 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).

Currently, 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.

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