

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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SENATE BILL DRS15434-LUa-136C

Short Title: Military Family Food Security & Readiness Act. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Applewhite, Murdock, and Bradley (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO PROVIDE TEMPORARY NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT AND ELIGIBILITY
3 FLEXIBILITY FOR MILITARY FAMILIES DURING PERIODS OF DEPLOYMENT OR
4 ACTIVATION.

5 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

6 SECTION 1. Article 2 of Chapter 108A of the General Statutes is amended by
7 adding a new Part to read:

8 "Part 5A. Military Family Food Security and Readiness Act.

9 **"§ 108A-53.25. Short title.**

10 This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Military Family Food Security and
11 Readiness Act."

12 **"§ 108A-53.26. Legislative findings.**

13 The General Assembly finds that members of the Armed Forces of the United States and their
14 families make significant sacrifices in service to this State and Nation. Periods of deployment or
15 activation may result in temporary disruptions to household income, including loss of spousal
16 income due to caregiving responsibilities. Certain components of military compensation,
17 including the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) and Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS),
18 may artificially inflate household income calculations for purposes of determining eligibility for
19 nutrition assistance programs. Food insecurity among military families negatively impacts
20 military readiness, retention, and family stability.

21 **"§ 108A-53.27. Definitions.**

22 For purposes of this Part, the following definitions apply:

- 23 (1) Activated service member. – A member of the North Carolina National Guard
24 or a reserve component of the Armed Forces ordered to duty under Title 10 or
25 Title 32 of the United States Code.
26 (2) Deployed. – An act in which a service member is ordered to active duty
27 outside the member's permanent duty station for a period of 30 consecutive
28 days or more.
29 (3) Eligible military household. – A household in which a service member is
30 deployed or activated and which includes at least one dependent.

31 **"§ 108A-53.28. Temporary income disregard.**

32 (a) The Department shall, to the extent permitted under federal law or through any
33 necessary waivers, exclude the following from household income calculations for purposes of
34 determining eligibility for electronic food and nutrition benefits during a qualifying deployment
35 or activation:

- 36 (1) Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH).



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1 (2) Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS).

2 (3) Family Separation Allowance.

3 (4) Imminent danger pay or hazardous duty pay.

4 (b) The Department shall seek any necessary federal approvals or waivers to implement
5 this section.

6 **"§ 108A-53.29. Deployment-based eligibility flexibility.**

7 (a) During a qualifying deployment or activation, the Department shall apply an income
8 eligibility adjustment for eligible military households by increasing the gross income eligibility
9 threshold by up to twenty-five percent (25%), to the extent permitted under federal law.

10 (b) If federal approval is not granted, the Department shall implement equivalent relief
11 through a State-funded supplemental nutrition program as provided in G.S. 108A-53.30.

12 **"§ 108A-53.30. Military family deployment supplemental nutrition program.**

13 (a) The Department shall establish a State-funded supplemental nutrition program for
14 eligible military households that do not qualify for electronic food and nutrition benefits under
15 Part 5 of this Article due to income thresholds but demonstrate financial hardship due to
16 deployment or activation. When applying for benefits pursuant to this section, the service
17 member's spouse or household dependent, as applicable, shall present Department of Defense
18 identification and a copy of the service member's military orders calling the service member to
19 deployment.

20 (b) The monthly benefit shall be not less than one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00) and not
21 more than three hundred dollars (\$300.00), as determined by the Department based on available
22 funds.

23 (c) Benefits shall be provided for the duration of deployment and up to 90 days following
24 the service member's return. The household receiving benefits pursuant to this section shall notify
25 the Department, in a manner determined by the Department, of the service member's return.

26 (d) The Department shall submit a report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee
27 on Health and Human Services by March 1 of each year detailing program participation,
28 expenditures, and outcomes.

29 **"§ 108A-53.31. Expedited access.**

30 The Department shall establish an expedited application and approval process, not to exceed
31 10 calendar days, for military households eligible for the supplemental nutrition benefits pursuant
32 to G.S. 108A-53.30 and shall coordinate with appropriate military installations to streamline
33 verification of deployment status.

34 **"§ 108A-53.32. National Guard and Reserve.**

35 All provisions of this Part shall apply equally to members of the National Guard and Reserve
36 who are activated under federal or State authority.

37 **"§ 108A-53.33. Exemptions.**

38 Notwithstanding G.S. 108A-52 and as permitted by federal law, the Department shall seek a
39 waiver to exempt able-bodied adults from the work requirements under 7 U.S.C. § 2015(o) for
40 purposes of eligibility of benefits pursuant to this Part.

41 **"§ 108A-53.34. Applicability of Part.**

42 This act does not apply when a member makes a permanent change of station or assignment
43 without dependents."

44 **SECTION 2.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of
45 Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services, the sum of seventy-seven million six
46 hundred thousand dollars (\$77,600,000) in recurring funds beginning in the 2026-2027 fiscal
47 year to implement this act.

48 **SECTION 3.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2026, and applies to qualifying
49 deployments or activations occurring on or after that date.