



State Soldier Assistance Program (SSAP) Education Benefits Proposed Legislative Changes for the 2024 Legislature

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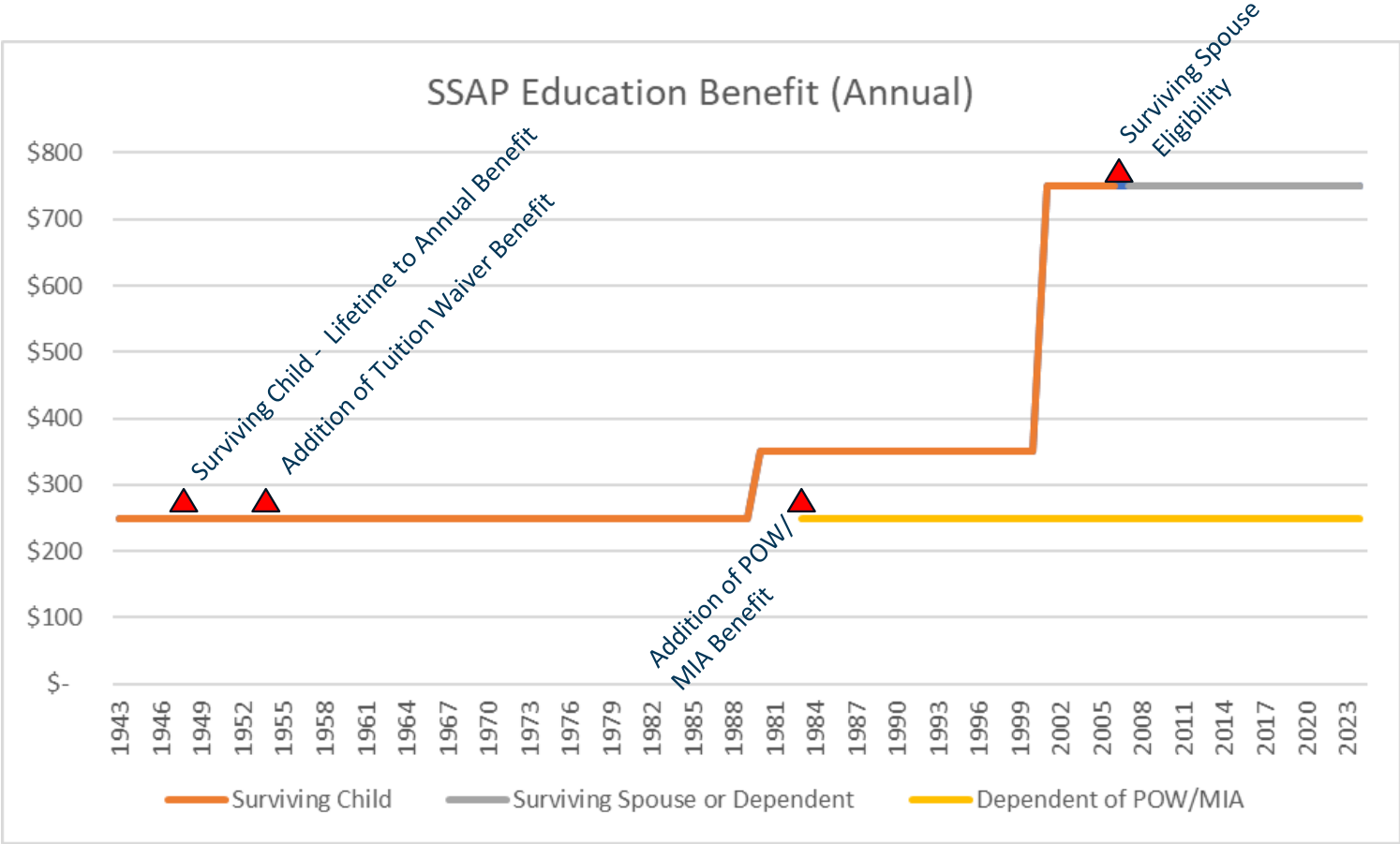
MDVA-proposed Policy Initiative for the 2024 Legislative Session to:

- **Sunset** obsolete Veterans Education benefits
- **Incorporate** like Veterans Education programs
- **Expand** Spouse and Dependent Child education benefits
- **Consolidate** authority for Veterans education programs under one division

Driving Factors

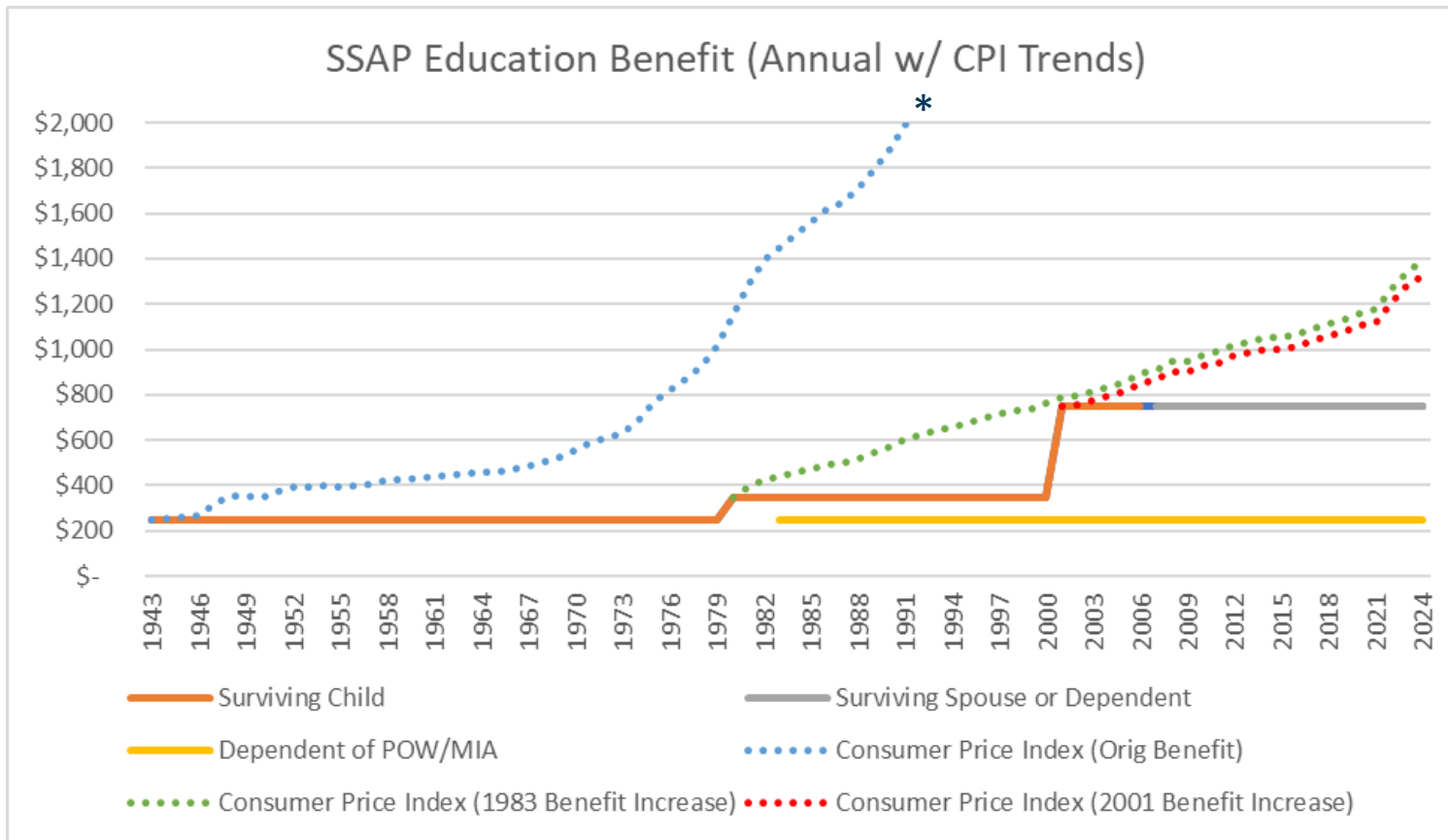
- Wilder Foundation Study Recommendations
- MDVA-identified need for benefit administration adjustment/streamlining
- Consolidation of Veterans Education Programs within MDVA under the Education and Occupational Resources Division (as of July 2024)

SSAP Education Benefit (Historical)



- Veteran Benefit is a Lifetime amount (profile matches “Surviving Child”)
- Benefits from 1947-Pres reflects annual amounts
- Tuition Waiver instituted in 1953
- Benefits for dependents of POW/MIA instituted in 1983
- Spouses included as beneficiaries as of 2007
- MN GI Bill established in 2007

SSAP Education Benefit (Consumer Price Index - Trends)



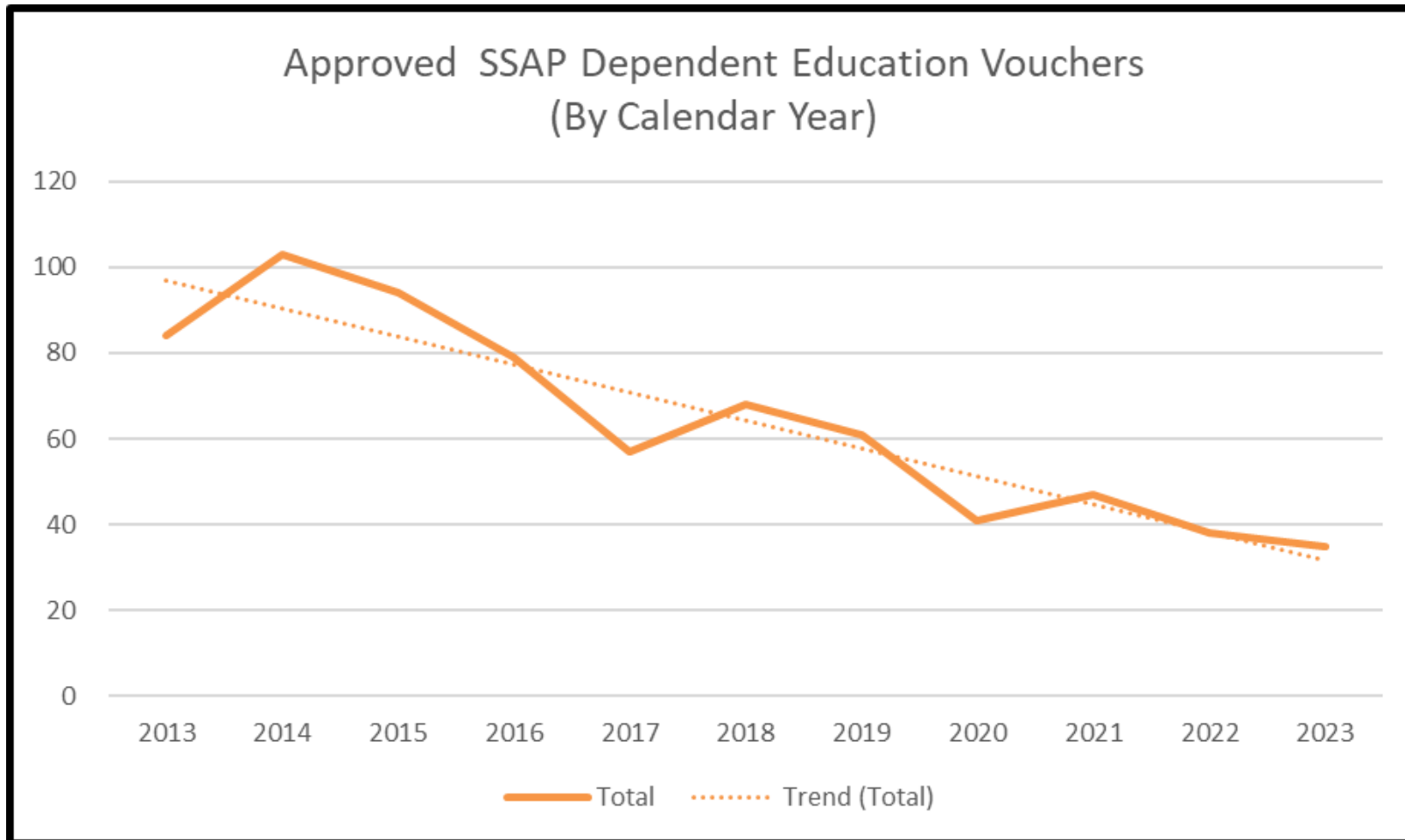
- \$250 in 1943 = \$4,562
- \$350 in 1980 = \$1,387
- \$750 in 2001 = \$1,321

*Consumer Price Index value of original 1943 benefit equates to \$4,562 in 2024 dollars

Policy Initiative Components

- Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) is proposing to update Minn. Stat. §197.75 to include:
 - **Maintain** the current Surviving Spouse and Dependent Education Benefit to spouses and children of deceased Veterans
 - **Incorporate** the provisions of Minn. Stat. §197.752 (Educational Assistance to POW/MIA Dependents) within Minn. Stat. §197.75 and repeal Minn. Stat. §197.752 as a stand-alone statute.
 - **Sunset** the Veteran Education Benefit currently provided within Minn. Stat. §197.75
 - **Increase** the annual educational assistance stipend from \$750 to \$1,500 to account for inflation
 - **Expand** the Surviving Spouse and Dependent Education Benefit to spouses and children of Veterans with a service-connected disability of seventy percent (70%) or greater as rated by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs

Program Usage



- 103 vouchers processed in 2014
- Fewer than 40 vouchers processed in 2023

Potential Eligible Recipients

US Dept of Veterans Affairs Data	
MN Population	5,707,390
# MN Vets	294,232
# MN Vets w/ \geq 70% SCD	31,921
# MN Vets w/ >70% SCD & Dependent Children in Household	7,821
Potential Eligible Dependent Children	312

Developed in Consultation With:

- US Dept of Veterans Affairs
- Office of the MN State Demographer
- US Census Bureau – American Community Survey (ACS) Data
- MN Office of Higher Education (OHE)

Calculation Considerations:

- Number of children per Veteran: 1.8 (US Census Bureau - ACS data)
- Likelihood of Undergrad enrollment in a public institution
- Likelihood of attending in-state institution
- “Take-up Rate” of eligible applicants to apply for benefit

- BL: This proposal is NOT asking for new money or more money for the SSAP Education Benefit
- This proposal IS asking for support to:
 - **Maintain** the current Surviving Spouse and Dependent Education Benefit to spouses and children of deceased Veterans
 - **Incorporate** the provisions of Minn. Stat. §197.752 (Educational Assistance to POW/MIA Dependents) within Minn. Stat. §197.75 and repeal Minn. Stat. §197.752 as a stand-alone statute
 - **Sunset** the Veteran Education Benefit currently provided within Minn. Stat. §197.75
 - **Increase** the annual educational assistance stipend from \$750 to \$1,500 to account for inflation
 - **Expand** the Surviving Spouse and Dependent Education Benefit to spouses and children of Veterans with a service-connected disability of seventy percent (70%) or greater as rated by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs
 - **Consolidate** appropriations authority to expend Veterans Education funds under the MDVA Education and Occupational Resources Division



Questions?