



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF VETERANS PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS

2020 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W. • Suite 1975 • Washington, D.C. 20006-1846

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF VETERANS' PROGRAM
ADMINISTRATORS**

FOR THE

SENATE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS

VETERANS' EDUCATION

June 15, 2017

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The National Association of Veterans' Program Administrators (NAVPA) is an organization of institutions and individuals who are involved or interested in the operation of veterans' affairs programs and/or the delivery of services to veterans as Veterans' Education Program Administrators across the country. A Board of Directors elected at our annual conference governs NAVPA. The purpose of NAVPA is to promote professional competency and efficiency through an association of members and others allied with, and involved in, veterans' educational programs and to promote the development, improvement and extension of opportunities to any service member, veteran or dependent of a veteran, for his or her personal growth and development to its fullest potential. This is achieved through assisting with the assessment and attainment of individual needs, communicating and cooperating with communities, schools, agencies and organizations at the local, state, regional and federal levels; developing productive relations with the Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Education, Department of Defense, and other federal or national Veterans Service Organization or agency serving veterans; participating in efforts to facilitate the education and/or training of educationally or otherwise disadvantaged veterans and to promote cooperative studies, research, evaluation, workshops, seminars, conferences, and other activities as may be desired or required to fulfill the purpose of NAVPA.

MEMBERSHIP

NAVPA has served as the voice of advocacy for veterans in higher education since its founding in 1975. Our research, training, and policy initiatives have developed programs and support services to ensure veterans achieve their academic and professional goals. NAVPA's membership now includes 344 Institutions of Higher Learning across 47 states that represent 431,032 veterans.



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Chairman Isakson, Ranking Member Tester, and Members of the Committee, on behalf of the National Association of Veterans' Program Administrators (NAVPA), we would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit our views on pending legislation before the Committee.

S. 410, Shawna Hill Post 9/11 Education Transferability Act (Crapo, Risch)

NAVPA supports S. 410 "*Shawna Hill Post 9/11 Education Transferability Act*," which would allow veterans to reallocate their Post-9/11 GI Bill education benefits in situations where the dependent whom they assigned their education benefits to passes away before they can be used. We urge the members of the Committee to support this legislation to prevent veterans from facing the possibility of losing the Post-9/11 GI Bill after experiencing the loss of a loved one.

S. 473, Educational Development for Troops and Veterans Act of 2017 (Tester, Blumenthal, Brown, Murray)

NAVPA strongly supports "*SEC. 873. GRANTS FOR VETERAN STUDENT CENTERS of S. 473, Educational Development for Troops and Veterans Act of 2017*," to provide funds for grants that would allow institutions of higher education to establish, maintain, improve, and operate Veteran Student Centers. Our membership has found overwhelming evidence that institutions with Veteran Student Success Centers on campus have consistently seen an increase in student veteran retention and graduation rates.

S. 798, Yellow Ribbon Improvement Act (Cassidy, Brown, Tillis)

NAVPA supports S. 798 "*Yellow Ribbon Improvement Act*" to allow the Yellow Ribbon Program to apply to individuals pursuing programs of education while on active duty and to recipients of the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry scholarship. NAVPA offers its support of S. 798 as long as the legislation will continue to allow institutions that voluntarily



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participate in the Yellow Ribbon Program to decide the level of assistance offered to beneficiaries.

S. 882, a bill to provide entitlement to Post-9/11 Educational Assistance for members of the Armed Forces awarded the Purple Heart (Rounds, Boozman)

NAVPA fully supports S. 882, *“to provide entitlement to Post-9/11 Educational Assistance for members of the Armed Forces awarded the Purple Heart.”* Our membership believes that our Nation’s heroes deserve every opportunity to receive a post-secondary education and urge the Committee to support the legislation that will provide Post-9/11 Educational Assistance to Purple Heart Recipients.

S. 1192, Veterans TEST Accessibility Act (Rounds, Hirono)

NAVPA has been, and continues to be, a staunch supporter of legislation that will allow current and prior service members to use Post-9/11 GI Bill education benefits to participate in national tests that assess prior learning and knowledge. The results of these tests provide opportunities to beneficiaries to receive college credit at institutions of higher learning, which will help them achieve their academic goals in a timelier manner. NAVPA asks that the Committee fully support S. 1192 and encourage colleagues to act swiftly on this legislation.

S. 1277, Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses Act of 2017 (Boozman, Heller)

NAVPA is opposed to S. 1277 *“Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses Act of 2017,”* which would create a pilot program to allow veterans to participate in technology programs not offered by institutions of higher learning, and will not lead to a degree. Many of NAVPA’s member institutions provide instruction in computer programming, computer



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software, media application, data processing, and information sciences that ensure veterans receive a degree or certification in their program of study. NAVPA does not support S. 1277, as the legislation would allow veterans to participate in education and training programs that are not accredited. Receiving training and education from an organization without accreditation could have a negative impact on the veteran's ability to secure employment within their desired field, as well as limit their success in the workforce.

Discussion Draft to improve Post-9/11 Educational Assistance

NAVPA greatly appreciates the opportunity to participate in the discussion to improve Post-9/11 Educational Assistance, and offers the following positions on the current draft.

NAVPA supports legislation that provides additional assistance to beneficiaries pursuing degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, or Health. However, the language in "*SEC. 3. ADDITIONAL POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS PURSUING PRO- GRAMS OF EDUCATION IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, MATH, OR HEALTH CARE*," "*§ 3320. Additional assistance*" does not address a timeline that qualifies a student as being enrolled in a program approved for additional assistance. NAVPA recommends including a requirement that the student be enrolled in a qualifying degree program once they have exhausted 18 months of educational assistance. NAVPA also recommends the legislation clearly define what entity will be responsible for submitting documentation of eligibility, use of funds, and outcomes.

NAVPA supports "*SEC. 6. CALCULATION OF MONTHLY HOUSING STIPEND UNDER POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BASED ON LOCATION OF CAMPUS WHERE CLASSES ARE ATTENDED*"



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NAVPA supports “*SEC. 7. REPEAL OF SUNSET ON WORK-STUDY ALLOWANCE FROM DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FOR CERTAIN QUALIFYING WORK-STUDY ACTIVITIES*”

NAVPA supports “*SEC. 8. AUTHORIZATION OF TRANSFER OF ENTITLEMENT TO POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE BY DEPENDENTS WHO RECEIVE TRANSFERS FROM INDIVIDUALS WHO SUBSEQUENTLY DIE*”

NAVPA supports “*SEC. 9. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PROVISION OF ON-CAMPUS EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL COUNSELING FOR VETERANS*”

NAVPA supports “*SEC. 10. RESTORATION OF ENTITLEMENT TO POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE AND OTHER RE-LIEF FOR VETERANS AFFECTED BY SCHOOL CLOSURE*”

NAVPA supports “*SEC. 12. IMPROVEMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OF THE VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION*”

NAVPA strongly supports “*SEC. 15. LIMITATION ON USE OF REPORTING FEES PAYABLE TO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND JOINT APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING COMMITTEES,*” which clearly defines the requirement for the tracking and proper use of reporting fees paid to an institution. NAVPA recommends amending “*(2) Such reporting fee shall be computed for each calendar year by multiplying \$16 by the number of eligible veterans or eligible persons enrolled under this chapter or chapter 31, 34, or 35 of this title*” to reflect a change in the reporting fee “*by multiplying \$18 by the number of eligible veterans or eligible persons enrolled.*” These fees are the only funding provided that is required to use for the certification of benefits. School Certifying Officials rely on reporting fees to attend training, where they learn how to navigate the complex certifying process, as well as participate in



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workshops and seminars to learn about ongoing changes to policies and procedures. NAVPA strongly urges the Committee to make this revision to ensure the timely and accurate processing of educational benefits, which will increase enrollment and retention while reducing the Department of Veterans Affairs increasing debt accumulated, in part, by inaccurate processing at institutions and the VA.

NAVPA supports “*SEC. 16. TRAINING FOR SCHOOL CERTIFYING OFFICIALS AS CONDITION OF APPROVAL OF COURSES FOR VETERANS EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE*” and offers to assist both the Secretary and State Approving Agencies develop the curriculum for the required training programs.

Chairman Isakson, Ranking Member Tester, and Committee Members, I want to thank you again for this opportunity to express the views of NAVPA’s members on these important issues as you consider legislation affecting the education of our nation’s veterans. On behalf of our entire membership, I want to extend our heartfelt thanks to each of the Members of the Committee for all the work you do to support veterans.

Respectfully,

Phil Gore
Legislative Director
National Association of Veterans’ Program Administrators