



Reserve Officers Association of the United States  
One Constitution Avenue, NE, Washington, DC 20002-5655

# POSITION PAPER

Direct Line: (202) 646-7713  
Toll-Free: (800) 809-9448 ext 713  
[www.roa.org](http://www.roa.org) - [mhanson@roa.org](mailto:mhanson@roa.org)

LPP 17-14 February 2014

## GI BILL AND ACCESS TO FUTURE EDUCATION

### Requested Action

**The Reserve Officers Association urges Congress to continue its support of the Post 9/11 GI Bill enhancements and Tuition Assistance.**

ROA believes the following enhancements and improvements should be pursued in regards to the Post-9/11 GI Bill and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) education benefits:

- All GI Bill funding and administration belongs under the jurisdiction of the Senate and House committees on Veterans Affairs where veterans' education is a high priority.
- Adjust credit methods for those transferring from MGIB to the Post-9/11 GI Bill.
- Improve oversight of colleges and associated loans given to student veterans.
  - Establish an Ombudsman system at VA to take student complaints.
- Accredite active duty experience and training toward completion of education programs.
- Improve support services for military, veterans and their families.
- Stipulate that Reserve Component personnel can use their educational benefits while mobilized.
- Transfer unused MGIB and Post-9/11 benefits for career service members to family members.

### Discussion

The Post-9/11 GI Bill (also known as the GI Bill for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century) provides financial support for education and housing to veterans with at least 90 days of aggregate service on or after September 11, 2001. It is also a retention and recruiting tool that expands certain educational benefits to service members, and their families. Despite many benefits provided, there are a few key legislative actions that are needed to better support the military member, veteran and family.

For those serving members who qualify for both the Montgomery GI bill (MGIB) and the Post 9/11 GI bill, the limit on total education is 36 months, yet the education dollar benefits are much lower under MGIB. Yet the allowances paid to the MGIB for Selected Reserve is less than 12 percent of what is paid in the Post 9/11 GI Bill. Rather than losing months of education credit, serving members who used some MGIB should have education dollars adjusted instead.

Accreditation standards promote excellence in educational preparation while assuring the students' employers and other schools that graduates of accredited programs are educated in a core set of knowledge and skills. Yet, quality education can be achieved in a variety of ways; ROA supports accreditation options that recognize the military

[over]

education, training and experience of the individual student.

In January 2014, the VA and DoD announced a new online student complaint system where service members, veterans, and their families can report negative experiences at education institutions and training programs administering the Post-9/11 GI Bill, DoD Military Tuition Assistance, and other military-related education benefit programs.

A better informed customer makes for a better student. In February 2014, the Department of Veterans Affairs launched today an online GI Bill® Comparison Tool to make it easier for Veterans, Service members and dependents to calculate their Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits and learn more about VA's approved colleges, universities and other education and training programs across the country. This site can be found at:

<http://department-of-veterans-affairs.github.io/gi-bill-comparison-tool/>

## **Background:**

Enacted in 1984, The Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB), also known as the Veteran's GI Bill of Rights, provides military education benefits to Active and Reserve duty service members of the U.S. military. The incremental manner in which Chapters 30, 1606, and 1607 have evolved has led to inequities in educational benefits.

Active Duty MGIB enrollment costs a member \$1200 that is paid over the first 12 months of active duty. An Active member can receive up to \$1,648 per month to go to school, while a Reservist has no enrollment costs but is paid only \$362 per month as a full time student.

The Post 9/11 GI Bill pays up to \$ 1600 per month, a \$1000 a year book stipend, plus a monthly living allowance up to \$2750 in urban centers. A Post 9/11 reimbursement calculator can be found at: <http://newgibill.org/calculator/>

The Montgomery GI Bill, codified in Title 38, Chapter 30, was designed to stimulate All-Volunteer Force recruitment and retention and to help veterans readjust to the civilian world on completion of their service. Language authorization for a Selected Reserve version of MGIB is in Title 10, Chapter 1606.

MGIB-SR began to erode as a benefit at parity just as the active forces began to be deployed more often, and thousands of National Guard and Reserve were recalled or mobilized to provide supplemental operational support. These G-R tours did not qualify for active MGIB.

Many veterans and military service organizations worked together to push for an updated, more encompassing GI Bill to meet contemporary costs, changes in force structure, and the rapid deployments and return of service members from Iraq and Afghanistan. Congress signed into law the Post-9/11 GI Bill in July 2008. The new bill covers the full cost of undergraduate education at any public institution of higher learning (degree-granting institutions) in the country and many private schools, and provides transfer of eligibility for benefits.