

April 13, 2020

U.S. Senator Jerry Moran
Chairman
Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
SR-412 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

U.S. Senator Jon Tester
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
SR-412 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Moran and Ranking Member Tester:

On behalf of the associations listed below, representing two- and four-year, public and private colleges and universities, I write in strong support of your legislation, S. ____, the Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act of 2020. We understand that bipartisan companion legislation, H.R. 6322, passed the House last week. We appreciate your efforts to protect veterans' education benefits during the COVID-19 crisis and hope the Senate will act quickly to pass this important legislation.

As the extent of the crisis began to spread last month across the country, Congress acted swiftly to ensure that student veterans did not lose access to their GI Bill benefits and housing allowances as their institutions moved coursework online. As the pandemic continues to impact the ways in which student veterans work and learn, additional flexibility will continue to ensure our military-connected students have their financial needs met and can continue with their studies.

The Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act would provide the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) important flexibility to address disruptions to veterans' education benefits caused by COVID-19 through December 21, 2020. Among its provisions, the bill would:

- allow the VA to continue to pay VA work study allowances to veterans, even if their campuses are shut down and/or veterans are unable to reach their place of employment;
- expand on provisions in current law to ensure that veterans can receive an additional monthly housing allowance payment if their institution closes due to COVID-19;
- clarify that veterans can have their education entitlements – normally limited to 36 months – restored if their campus closes or the veteran needs to withdraw due to the COVID-19 emergency; and
- allow veterans who are currently enrolled and approaching their delimiting date (the date on which their benefits would expire) to apply to VA for an extension.

These and other changes will help ensure that veterans' education benefits are not negatively impacted by campus programming changes and/or closures necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic that are beyond their control.

We strongly support passage of the legislation and thank you again for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ted Mitchell".

Ted Mitchell
President

On behalf of:

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council on Education
Association of American Universities
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities
College and University Professional Association for Human Resources
Council for Christian Colleges & Universities
Council for Higher Education Accreditation
Council of Graduate Schools
EDUCAUSE
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education
National Association of College and University Business Officers
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators