



PRESS RELEASE

Vietnam Veterans of America

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VVA Calls for Open Debate on “Forever GI Bill”

(Washington, DC) – “VVA applauds Chairman Roe for standing firm in his belief that the GI Bill should be a benefit that doesn’t go away after some arbitrary time limit,” said John Rowan, National President of Vietnam Veterans of America. “The current GI Bill fails many who need it most, including those unable to use the benefit within the 15-year window and those who have been robbed of the benefit due to an administrative discharge,” noted Rowan.

Currently, the Montgomery GI Bill, which service members buy into for \$100 per month for one year, expires after 10 years of final separation from service. The Post-9/11 GI Bill expires after 15 years of final separation from service. For veterans, for survivors, and for their families who face the toughest transitions after service, these expiration dates create additional strain. Additionally, removing the arbitrary time limit allows the veteran to retrain and recover later in life should his/her career be disrupted by evolving technologies or unpredictable economic trends. This proposal seeks to combine the models of the Montgomery GI Bill and Post-9/11 GI Bill to fix gaping loopholes and create a sustainable “Forever GI Bill.”

Many veterans from the Post-9/11 generation with PTSD and other service-related illnesses or injuries end up ineligible for transition benefits, such as the GI Bill, due to unfair administrative discharges. As many as 10 percent of recently discharged Marines have been excluded from these benefits and services, which compounds the already significant barriers faced during transition, especially for those with PTSD.

“We understand the concerns of those who don’t like the contribution idea, but frankly, we can’t shut down debate before it begins and expect to help those that the GI Bill leaves behind,” said Rowan. “We’re excited to talk about closing loopholes, and expanding and protecting this benefit. We look forward to seeing realistic proposals to pay for these improvements from our friends in the military and veterans community.”

“Vietnam Veterans of America is the nation’s only congressionally chartered veterans’ service organization dedicated to the needs of Vietnam-era veterans and their families. VVA’s founding principle is “Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another.”

