



## Policy Priorities 2020-2021

### GI Bill Improvements

- Establish “break pay” to provide students with Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) during school breaks.
- Reform overseas MHA rates so they are consistent with the Department of Defense (DoD) Overseas Housing Allowance.
- Create MHA safeguards for students at schools that temporarily close because of a natural disaster.
- Ensure members of the Guard and Reserve receive the same benefits as those on active duty when they perform the same work.
- Give new service members more time to make a more informed decision about enrolling and paying for the Montgomery GI Bill.
- Eliminate the cap on years that limits how long VA education beneficiaries are eligible for in-state tuition.

### VA Modernization

- Establish the Veteran Economic Opportunity Administration with Undersecretary representation for all economic opportunity and transition programs at VA.
- Create an enterprise-wide contact database.
- Expand and modernize the GI Bill College Comparison Tool.
- Review and modernize programs such as Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) and VA Work Study.
- Establish parity between the Post-9/11 GI Bill and VR&E MHA rates.

### Higher Education Act Reauthorization

The Higher Education Act has a profound impact on the everyday lives of student veterans. Recent attempts to reauthorize HEA have resulted in bills that benefit bad schools more than supporting the modern student. SVA is committed to keeping the voice of student veterans at the forefront of HEA reauthorization efforts.

- Count VA and DoD educational benefits as federal funds for the purpose of applying the 90-10 rule and to close the existing loophole.
- Strengthen the power of the higher education triad to prevent predatory practices across all education sectors.
- Strengthen Gainful Employment and Borrower’s Defense to protect students and taxpayers against fraud, waste, and abuse.
- Develop clear and equitable standards on conversion of proprietary school status to non-profit school status with a focus on quality outcomes for students.

### Post-Traditional Student Needs for Success

- Call for better data on student food and housing insecurity.
- Increase access to childcare on campus.
- Explore options to better integrate and support VA healthcare on campuses.
- Increase the number of VR&E counselors and VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC) locations and counselors.



## Accountability and Affordability

- Reform accreditation process to place emphasis on student outcomes and adapt for innovative learning practices.
- Study emerging education innovations to better understand the effectiveness and efficacy of such models.
- Institutionalize accountability standards through regular reports to congress and third-party stakeholders, department-level and congressional oversight, and annual reviews of program process.
- Protect programs such as Income-Driven Repayment and Public Service Loan Forgiveness.
- Increase oversight and legal rights for military-connected students experiencing school closures or overpayment collections.

## Effective and Empowering Government

- Coordinate data-sharing across government agencies and make data publicly available and authorize relevant interagency task forces, including stakeholder representation.
- Create opportunities for veterans to opt-out of existing benefits and programs instead of current opt-in requirements.
- Disaggregate unrelated topics in negotiated rule-making.
- Clarify and improve VA regulatory guidance on education benefits.
- Encourage Congress and policy leaders to use language focused on empowerment of veterans.
- Reform VA debt collection procedures to help students better understand when and what they owe.
- Support increased and more efficient communication between the Department of Education and VA and formalize ombudsman or liaison role between agencies.

## A Look at Student Veterans of America

With a focused mission on empowering student veterans, SVA is committed to providing an educational experience that goes beyond the classroom. Through a dedicated network of more than 1,500 on-campus chapters in all 50 states and 4 countries representing more than 750,000 student veterans, SVA aims to inspire yesterday's warriors by connecting student veterans with a community of like-minded chapter leaders. Every day these passionate leaders work to provide the necessary resources, network support, and advocacy to ensure student veterans can effectively connect, expand their skills, and ultimately achieve their greatest potential.

## SVA Government Affairs

The SVA Department of Government Affairs represents student veterans in the nation's capital and across the country, serving as subject matter experts on higher education policy for non-traditional students. We advocate on behalf of student veterans through informing policy makers in the executive and legislative branches on data, research, and direct experiences of veterans in college. Our team readily provides the perspective of this population of impressive students.

## Keep In Touch

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