

TALKING POINTS



ONE

MHA REFORM

G.I. Bill monthly housing allowance (MHA) does not keep pace with inflation or DoD Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rates, leaving veterans vulnerable.

- Online students face additional disadvantages, receiving lower MHA than in-person students, despite the fact that many choose online education out of necessity rather than preference.
- Without MHA parity for online students, veterans already facing significant challenges may be forced to choose between pursuing their education and maintaining financial stability.

WHAT CAN CONGRESS DO?

- SVA urges Congress to establish MHA parity for online learners, ensuring that all student veterans, regardless of their learning format, receive the financial support needed to maintain stable housing.
- Reintroduce the *Expanding Access for Online Veteran Students Act* from the 118th Congress.

TWO

BOOK STIPEND

Update to G.I. Bill Annual Book Stipend.

- The Post 9/11 GI Bill, unchanged at \$1,000 since 2009, no longer covers rising textbook and material costs.
- SVA's Book Stipend Survey found that nearly 45% of respondents spent well over the \$1,000 stipend allowance annually, with over half of those being undergraduate students.
- Many student veterans, especially in STEM, exceed their stipend in one semester due to costly materials and must take on additional debt to cover the cost of supplies, even while using the GI Bill.

WHAT CAN CONGRESS DO?

- SVA calls for the reintroduce the *Veteran Education Assistance Adjustment Act* from last Congress, which would increase to \$1,400 annually and add a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA).
- Create STEM-specific stipend.

NOTES:

TALKING POINTS



G.I. BILL RESTITUTION

Student veterans defrauded by institutions often receive no restitution for lost G.I. Bill benefits.

THREE

- Some schools engage in fraud and deceptive practices leaving student veterans with lost G.I. Bill benefit.
- When veterans are deceived, they lose more than just tuition dollars—they lose time, housing stability, and access to the careers they were promised.

WHAT CAN CONGRESS DO?

- Pass H.R. 1391, the Student Veteran Benefit Restoration Act, which would restore G.I. Bill entitlement to student veterans and make them whole after being defrauded by their education institutions.
- Ensure proper oversight and accountability to guarantee that schools provide veterans with clear, accurate, and transparent information before they enroll.

VA WORK STUDY EXPANSION

The Veteran Affairs Work Study Program (VAWS) is outdated and underutilized, forcing many veterans into jobs that do not align with their career aspirations to meet financial needs.

FOUR

- The VAWS Program should provide career-relevant opportunities instead of limiting veterans to administrative tasks within VA offices.
- Veterans pursue careers in diverse fields like cybersecurity, healthcare, and public service—the VAWS should support these goals.

WHAT CAN CONGRESS DO?

- Reintroduce the *VA Work-Study Improvement Act* and the *Student Veteran Work Study Modernization Act*, which would:
 - Expand work-study eligibility to part-time student veterans.
 - Increase the types of activities and positions available to align with veterans' academic and career goals.

NOTES:
