

GI Bill Cuts Halted Ahead of Independence Day

IAVA's Impact Felt in Senate as Massive Veterans Bill Stalls

Washington, D.C. (July 1, 2016) – Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America's campaign to #DefendtheGIBill cleared a major hurdle this week as the U.S. Senate Veteran Affairs Committee (SVAC) failed in its attempt to bend the rules and garner a hasty vote on the [Veterans First Act](#) "omnibus" ahead of their Independence Day break. This massive bill robs \$3.4 billion from the Post-9/11 GI Bill to pay for other programs as politicians scramble to pass this enormous veterans spending bill in the midst of campaign season. IAVA continues to call on SVAC leaders Senator Johnny Isakson (R-GA) and Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and all members of the Senate to remove proposed cuts to the landmark GI Bill, which is critical to the education and career options for transitioning service members, before proceeding to a vote.

"Right now, our troops are fighting overseas and Senators Isakson, Blumenthal, Reid and McConnell are AWOL. A shocking 98 out of 100 US Senators are AWOL. With the continued political infighting in Congress, veterans are caught in the crosshairs wondering which of their benefits will be cut," said Paul Rieckhoff, Founder and CEO of IAVA. "Veterans First Act sponsors are seeking to expedite passage of this massive bill without a recorded vote—and without amendments on critical issues like these unprecedented GI Bill cuts. If Senators want to cut our GI Bill, they should at least have the guts to go on the record to say so. It is ridiculous that, on the eve of Independence Day, our elected officials are turning their backs on those we depend on most to protect our country's freedoms. IAVA fought hard nine years ago to get the Post-9/11 GI Bill passed and we will not stop fighting until Congress drops these cuts and vows never to chip away at our earned benefits."

The Post-9/11 GI Bill has been used by nearly one million veterans and their family members to accomplish educational goals and chart new career paths. The proposed cuts in the Veterans First Act will amount to approximately \$1,000 per veteran, per year. Over the course of one year, this equals one month of rent a veteran won't have as they pursue their education.

Since IAVA launched the [#DefendTheGIBill](#) campaign in March 2016, IAVA members have sent over 30,000 letters to Congress asking representatives to oppose any cuts to the Post-9/11 GI Bill. IAVA continues to call on Congress, President Obama and presumptive Republican nominee Donald Trump to take a stand and pledge to #DefendTheGIBill and oppose any cuts to the benefits our veterans rely on. See a full list of Members of Congress in opposition to the cuts [here](#).