

Historic GI Bill Expansion's Unanimous Passage in House Applauded by IAVA, Veterans

New York, NY (July 24, 2017) – Today, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, the leading voice of the Post-9/11 generation of veterans, applauded the historic and uniquely bi-partisan, unanimous passage of a strengthened and expanded GI Bill in the House of Representatives.

“This bill expands America’s best investment and creates a brighter future for millions of veterans and their families,” **said IAVA Founder and CEO, Paul Rieckhoff**. “It shows what Washington can do when everyone puts country ahead of politics. A powerful and diverse coalition of veterans groups showed the way, and we are pleased to see politicians from both sides of the aisle follow. This rare showing of true bi-partisanship and swift action is a model for what American can do when we all work together. It also shows the popularity and power of the veterans community and our civilian allies nationwide.”

IAVA has long supported overdue improvements to the GI Bill, many of which are outlined in our Policy Agenda here. This new bill will: extend the Yellow Ribbon Program to recipients of the Fry Scholarship; award Purple Heart recipients GI Bill eligibility regardless of active duty time served; ensure National Guard and Reserve Members get the same benefits as those they served on active duty with; and more. And it is a major improvement over earlier versions because it isn’t paid for through any new fees or taxes passed on to troops or veterans. IAVA will continue to advocate for more improvements, including closing the 90/10 loophole.

“This is very good news for veterans and our military,” **Rieckhoff continued**. “We now finally have a bi-partisan plan to appropriately expand the Post-9/11 GI Bill—that doesn’t do it on the backs of veterans and servicemembers, or by cutting other vital programs.”

“We look forward to getting the bill passed in the Senate and signed by the President’s quickly. We’re proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with Student Veterans of America, the American Legion, the VFW, and countless other VSO leaders. This is an important step for veterans, but every inch of ground we gain must also be defended. With budget cuts and waning attention for veterans affairs possible in years ahead, IAVA and our allies will continue to remain vigilant in holding the line to #DefendtheGIBill,” **continued Rieckhoff**.

IAVA led the passage of the Post-9/11 GI Bill in 2008 and in championing upgrades in 2010 and 2014. These upgrades simplified and improved tuition benefits, expanded eligibility to the National Guard, included vocational programs, and made nationwide in-state tuition rates a possibility for new

veterans.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill has been used at least 1.5 million veterans and their family members to accomplish educational goals and chart new career paths. In 2016, IAVA's year-long campaign to #DefendTheGIBill effectively killed over \$4 billion in attempted cuts to the Post-9/11 GI Bill by the 114th Congress.

IAVA member service programs have also served hundreds of thousands of veterans with one-on-one GI Bill support.