

[UPDATE: Bipartisan Opposition to GI Bill Tax Grows Rapidly](#)

UPDATE—NEW YORK, NY (April 25, 2017): Since Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) and other leading veterans groups came out strongly last week against a proposal that would tax new military enlistees to use their GI Bill, bipartisan voices have quickly joined in response. U.S. Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), House Veterans Affairs Committee (HVAC) Ranking Member Tim Walz (D-MN), Marine and Iraq War Veteran Rep. Seth Moulton (D-MA), and others swiftly voiced strong opposition to the measure.

[In a letter to Speaker Paul Ryan](#) (R-WI), Rep. Fitzpatrick slammed the proposal and cited IAVA's opposition to the bill. "GI Bill benefits are critical to successfully reintegrating our veterans into civilian life.

Charging service-members for access to these essential benefits further shifts the burden of war onto our veterans, who have already sacrificed so much defending our great nation."

[In a statement on behalf of HVAC Democrats](#), Rep. Walz (who is also a retired Sergeant Major) wrote: "While \$100.00 a month might not seem like a lot to a member of Congress, it certainly does when you're a Private taking home less than \$1,500 per month."

IAVA encourages every single member of Congress and President Trump to join us, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and countless others in strongly opposing this ill-advised tax on our troops in a time of war. Most members of Congress and the President remain silent on the issue, despite calls for support from IAVA and veterans across the country.

[IAVA CEO and Founder Paul Rieckhoff discussed the proposal with MSNBC's Greta Van Susteren on Friday](#). Van Susteren echoed the outrage of millions of Americans, saying "I can't believe we're trying to nickel-and-dime veterans... I am almost speechless."

Just since last Friday, nearly 10,000 Americans of all political backgrounds have signed on to [IAVA's petition to stop this tax on our education benefits](#).

In response to shocking media reports regarding a proposed registration tax on the GI Bill for new enlistees, IAVA released the following statement on April 18:

"There is plenty of room to improve the Post-9/11 GI Bill. IAVA led the creation of the original Post-9/11 GI Bill and later, GI Bill 2.0. And we welcome efforts to make the benefit stronger and more flexible," **said Paul Rieckhoff, Founder and CEO of IAVA**. "Our members consistently call for this sacred benefit to be protected—and expanded. Our Policy Agenda has an extensive list of specific recommendations."

Rieckhoff continued, “However, IAVA will vigorously oppose any and all attempts to impose a registration tax on this essential benefit. If Congress wants to find ways to raise more money, they can do it without nickel and diming newly-enlisted Privates. Pushing this GI Bill tax proposal on troops in a time of war is political cowardice. It’s also bad for recruiting and morale. Some politicians would rather make backroom deals than raise taxes or find other ways to support our troops as bombs continue to fall overseas. IAVA will work hard to ensure these politicians are exposed and forced to make their arguments publicly to the American public and our troops serving now overseas. We are sure they’ll see the folly of their ways and the negative impact on our national security and economy when they hear more directly from our members. Other groups may be willing to bend to Congress and special interests. But when it comes to protecting our GI Bill benefits, IAVA will never compromise.”

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.

IAVA is the leading voice of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans in Washington and communities nationwide. Led by veterans, our non-partisan advocacy work ensures that Iraq and Afghanistan veterans and their families are supported, protected and never forgotten. [Since 2004, IAVA has been a juggernaut for transformative policy change, creating and driving the national conversation and lasting change on issues ranging from Traumatic Brain Injury \(TBI\) to women veteran issues to veteran unemployment.](#)

IAVA is focused on results and has delivered historic impacts. Every year since 2007, in an increasingly gridlocked political environment and with an extremely limited operating budget, IAVA has passed at least one major piece of groundbreaking legislation for our community ranging from the Post-9/11 GI Bill (2008), to the VOW to Hire Heroes Act (2011), to The Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans (SAV) Act (2015).

See [IAVA’s Advocacy Program Digital Hub](#) the full list of victories, our policy agenda and to learn more about how you can help.