

Dear Fellow North Carolina Veteran:

As you may know, Senator Richard Burr, the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, recently joined Senator Graham (R-SC), Senator McCain (R-AZ) and fifteen other Senators in introducing the *Enhancement of Recruitment, Retention, and Readjustment Through Education Act of 2008* (S.2938). This bill is a simple and fair way to help active duty servicemembers, veterans, and members of the National Guard and Reserves attain their educational goals and encourage military careers. The bill seeks to ensure rapid implementation of the new benefits by building off of the existing education programs.

Among some of the more significant improvements that S 2938 will make to educational benefits are the following:

- The bill would immediately increase basic education benefits for active duty personnel and veterans from the current amount of \$1,100 to \$1,500. This benefit level would cover the average cost of a 4-year public college (including room, board, tuition, and fees). The basic benefits will increase to \$2,000 a month for those who have at least 12 years of service.
- The bill would immediately increase basic education benefits for Guard and Reserve members who have been called to active duty since September 11, 2001, from a maximum monthly benefit of \$880 to \$1,200. For those who serve for at least 12 years in the Reserves, that maximum monthly benefit would be raised to \$1,600.
- More active-duty servicemembers, veterans, and members of the Guard and Reserves would be eligible to transfer some or all of their education benefits to dependent children or a spouse. After 6 years of service, 50% of benefits may be transferred. 100% may be transferred after 12 years of service.
- The bill would allow servicemembers to use up to \$6,000 of their Montgomery GI Bill benefits per year to repay Federal student loans.
- The bill would allow more servicemembers, such as service academy graduates and Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps participants, and certain veterans who enlisted between 1977 and 1985, to access VA education benefits.

The Montgomery GI Bill has allowed millions of military servicemen and women to pursue higher education and other training programs. It is important that the GI Bill continue to provide educational opportunities to those who defend our country. S. 2938 will help ensure that this goal is accomplished in the most efficient manner possible by making significant improvements to existing programs. Many of you know through experience that it is one thing to announce that veterans are entitled to a new benefit, and it is quite another to create effective administrative systems to ensure that veterans actually receive the new benefits in a timely manner. By building off of existing

programs, rather than creating an entirely new administrative architecture, S. 2938 will ensure that increases in educational benefits reach the hands of beneficiaries without delay.

I have included a summary of the bill's major provisions as a separate attachment. If you have any questions or concerns about this bill or any other issue, I would be happy to discuss them with you. Thank you for your service and for your interest in improving the lives of veterans. If I can be of assistance, please let me know.

Regards,
Kevin

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