



UNITED STATES SENATE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

JOHNNY ISAKSON | CHAIRMAN

Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 ***Invests in the proven educational success of our veterans***

Harry Walter Colmery, an Army Air Service veteran and former national commander of the American Legion, drafted the original G.I. Bill in 1944 to improve the transition for World War II veterans back to civilian life. In keeping with Colmery's vision for helping veterans have a better experience after their service, the *Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017* will further invest in the proven educational success of our veterans and help propel them toward becoming the civic, business and public leaders of our country.

In addition to making much-needed updates for reservists, Purple Heart recipients, veterans who face school closures while enrolled, and surviving family members, the *Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017* provides increased resources and authority for educational assistance to pursue science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programs, computer programming and career technical training.

Most significantly, this bill recognizes our country's need for an agile and adaptable workforce and that American workers need to be lifelong learners. For that purpose, this bill eliminates the arbitrary 15-year period a veteran has to use the G.I. Bill so they can use their benefits at any time in their professional career.

Specifically, the *Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017*:

- Ends 15-year limit on G.I. Bill usage, allowing use of benefits for life;
- Provides G.I. Bill eligibility for reservists mobilized under selected reserve orders for preplanned missions in support of the combatant commands or in response to a major disaster or emergency;
- Provides G.I. Bill eligibility for reservists undergoing medical care;
- Provides full G.I. Bill benefits for Purple Heart recipients regardless of length of service;
- Extends Yellow Ribbon Program benefits to Fry scholarship recipients;
- Restores used G.I. Bill benefits to students who experience permanent school closures while enrolled;
- Increases G.I. Bill payments by \$2,300 per year for veterans with less than 12 months of active service;
- Creates pilot program for high-technology and computer programming courses;
- Expands education benefits for veterans pursuing science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) degrees;
- Increases amount of fees paid to schools for certification of student veteran enrollments;
- Improves G.I. Bill information technology system to fully automate claims;
- Increases monthly amount of educational assistance for survivors and dependents of disabled veterans;
- Increases funding for state-approving agencies to conduct oversight of schools; and
- Allows G.I. Bill use for distance courses in technical and career education institutions.