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JOINT COMMITTEE ON TAXATION

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

Testimony of Senator Mike Crapo  
Shauna Hill (S. 410)  
Senate Veterans Affairs Committee  
June 15, 2017

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Chairman Isakson, Ranking Member Tester, and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony on S. 410, the Shauna Hill Post 9/11 Education Benefits Transferability Act. Senator Jim Risch and I introduced this measure as a companion to legislation introduced in the House of Representatives by Representative Raúl Labrador. Our measure would make a crucial change to Post 9/11 GI Bill education benefits by allowing veterans to transfer their hard-earned education benefits from one dependent to another in the event that one dependent passes.

Representative Labrador and I were compelled to act on this issue after hearing the story of the Hill family. Shauna Hill was an active member of her community of Eagle, Idaho, and an accomplished figure skater and violinist with hopes of pursuing her passion for environmental law at Stanford University. Prior to retiring, her father, Captain Edward Hill, a 28-year Navy veteran, transferred his education benefits to Shauna. Unfortunately, in December 2012, tragedy struck the Hill family when Shauna was killed at 16 years old in a serious car accident. Following her death, Captain Hill contacted the VA in an attempt to reassign his education benefits to his younger daughter, Haley. Unfortunately, Captain Hill could not transfer his education benefits from Shauna to Haley because current statute precludes a veteran from transferring education benefits after retirement.

Few things in life are worse than losing a child. The Hill family's tragedy is only made worse by the fact that Captain Hill's hard-earned education benefits cannot be passed on to his surviving daughter. S. 410 would modify this unnecessarily rigid restriction by allowing veterans to reassign benefits in the event the original recipient dies, even after the servicemember retires. While seemingly slight, this change would have a meaningful impact on families like the Hill family, who plan their lives and aspirations around the availability of military education assistance.

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Already, Shauna's life has inspired people across Idaho and her premature death sparked dialogue about ways to make roads safer. S. 410 is another outcome of the Hill family's collective sacrifice and service and has earned the backing of the American Legion, Concerned Veterans for America, and Veterans of Foreign Wars. I thank the Committee for its thoughtful consideration of this legislation and look forward to working together on this and other important measures that make a meaningful impact on the everyday lives of servicemembers and their families.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.