

# Changes to the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill & What They Mean for your Campus

July 12, 2011

# Overview

- ▲ The Post-9/11 GI Bill of 2008 (AKA: “Chapter 33”)
  - Effective August 1, 2009
  - Provides comprehensive educational benefits to veterans who served on active duty following September 11
  - More than \$8 billion in education benefits to nearly 500,000 veterans and family members

# Overview (continued)

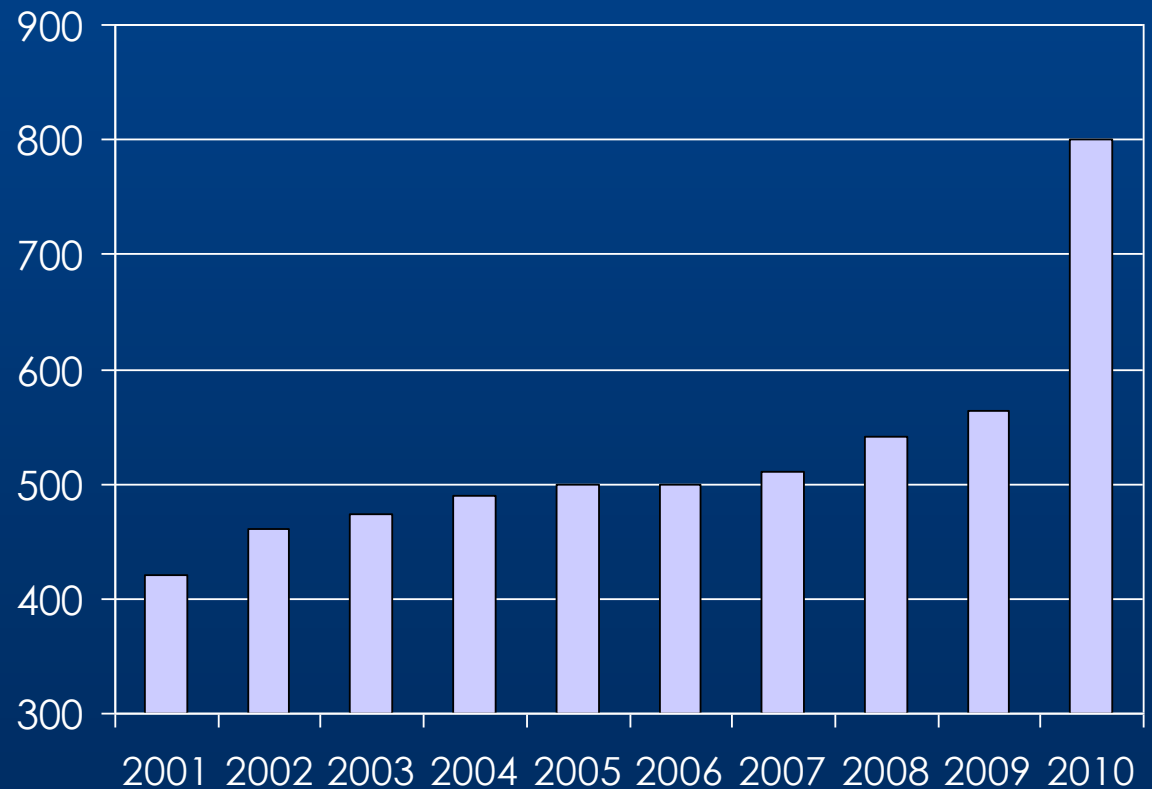
- ▲ The Post-9/11 “Improvements” Act of 2010
  - Signed by the President January 2011
  - Goal of legislation: to simplify the administration of Post-9/11 benefits
  - Contains important changes that campuses and veterans need to know about—e.g., national tuition and fee cap, net charges, break pay and approval of courses

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# VA Education Beneficiaries

*Participants in VA Education Programs by Fiscal Year  
(in thousands)*



# Legislative Changes: PL 111-377

- ▲ Effective now, payable on October 1, 2011
  - Expands program to include certain active service performed by National Guard members under Title 32 U.S.C
- ▲ Effective March 5, 2011
  - Limits Tuition and Fee payments for active duty members training at more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  time to eligibility levels (40%-100%) based on length of Post-9/11 service

# Legislative Changes: PL 111-377

- ▲ Effective August 1, 2011
  - Simplifies Tuition and Fee payments
    - ▲ Pays all in-state public school costs (including Masters/PhDs)
    - ▲ Caps private school costs at \$17,500—individual state caps no longer needed
    - ▲ Yellow Ribbon Program still applies above \$17,500

# Legislative Changes: PL 111-377

- ▲ Effective August 1, 2011 (continued)
  - Net Charges
    - ▲ Schools must report net cost for tuition and fees after deducting:
      - Any tuition, fees waivers/reductions
      - Scholarships, federal, state, institutional or employer based aid applied to the student's tuition and fee cost



# Legislative Changes: PL 111-377

- ▲ Effective August 1, 2011 (continued)

- Housing Allowance Payments

- ▲ Prorates Housing Allowance to training time

- ▲ Allows Vocational Rehabilitation participants to elect the higher Housing Allowance offered by Post-9/11 GI Bill if otherwise eligible

- Anticipated increase in Voc Rehab of 20% in 2012

- ▲ Adjusts Housing Allowance Rates in August instead of January

# Legislative Changes: PL 111-377

- ▲ Effective August 1, 2011 (continued)
  - Prohibits paying education benefits between terms (“interval pay” or “break pay”)
    - ▲ Applies to ALL VA education programs, not just the Post-9/11 GI Bill
    - ▲ Students will no longer continue to receive benefits for short breaks between terms (e.g., the Dec-Jan winter holiday)

# Legislative Changes: PL 111-377

- ▲ Effective August 1, 2011 (continued)
  - Allows reimbursement for more than one “license or certification” test
    - ▲ Previously only one test was allowed under the Post-9/11 GI Bill
    - ▲ Entitlement charged at the rate of one month for every \$1460 paid by VA
  - Allows reimbursement of fees paid to take national exams
    - ▲ e.g., SAT, ACT, GMAT, LSAT

# Legislative Changes: PL 111-377

## ▲ Effective August 1, 2011 (continued)

- Allows VA to pay MGIB and MGIB-SR kickers on a monthly basis

- ▲ Previously paid as a lump sum payment at the beginning of the term

- Allows personnel in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Public Health Service to transfer Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits

# Legislative Changes: PL 111-377

▲ Effective October 1, 2011

□ Allows students to use the Post-9/11 GI bill for:

▲ Non-college degree (NCD) programs:  
Pays actual net cost for in-State tuition and fees at public NCD institutions. At private and foreign institutions, pays the actual net costs for in-state tuition and fees or \$17,500, whichever is less. Also pays up to \$83 per month for books and supplies

# Legislative Changes: PL 111-377

▲ Effective October 1, 2011

□ Allows students to use the Post-9/11 GI bill for:

▲ On-the-job and apprenticeship training:  
Pays a monthly benefit amount prorated based on time in program and up to \$83 per month for books and supplies

▲ Flight programs: Per academic year, pays the actual net costs for in-state tuition and fees assessed by the school or \$10,000, whichever is less

# Legislative Changes: PL 111-377

## ▲ Effective October 1, 2011

### □ Allows students to use the Post-9/11 GI bill for:

▲ Correspondence training: Per academic year, pays the actual net costs for in-state tuition and fees assessed by the school or \$8,500, whichever is less

### □ Pays Housing Allowance for those solely in distance learning

▲ Half the national average of \$1,348

## ▲ Significant outreach effort underway to notify all students of all changes

# Legislative Changes: PL 111-377

## ▲ Sec. 203. Approval of Courses:

- ❑ Deems certain programs of education approved for VA based on their accreditation status
- ❑ For-Profit schools still need SAA approval
- ❑ VA in discussions with SAAs regarding implementation



# Things We're Working On

- ▲ IT Development
  - ▲ New Regulations
  - ▲ Training for Schools
  - ▲ Realignment of SAA Duties
  - ▲ Improved Debt Collection Process
  - ▲ Improved communication
    - Better letters
    - Info Self-Service for students
- ▲ [ebenefits.va.gov](http://ebenefits.va.gov)

# Things We're Looking At

## ▲ Certification of Enrollment

- Yearly Certifications
- Amended enrollment certification for net charges
- Housing allowance and books stipend paid based on initial enrollment cert

## ▲ Communication

### □ Choosing the Right School for You

- ▲ Not just how to apply for benefits and get paid
- ▲ Provides veterans with information and resources to aid them in making the best decision to meet their educational needs

# Challenges for Campuses

- ▲ Net charges
- ▲ Communications
- ▲ Institutional responsibilities
- ▲ Administrative capability
- ▲ Cross-Disciplinary Approach
- ▲ Planning and implementation

# Net Charges

## SUMMARY OF PROVISION:

The actual net cost for tuition and fees assessed by the institution after the application of—

(a) any waiver of, or reduction in, tuition and fees; and

(b) any scholarship, or other Federal, State, institutional, or employer-based aid or assistance (other than federal loans and Pell grants) that is “provided directly to the institution and specifically designated for the sole purpose of defraying tuition and fees”

# Net Charges

- ▲ Concerns that net charges provision will result in a substantial increase in “overpayments” that must be returned to VA
- ▲ Current VA policy requires that these “overpayments” are refunded to the student after classes begin, creating a debt burden for veterans and complex debt management issues for VA and schools
- ▲ Concerns regarding potential conflict with other tuition-restricted aid from third party sources

# Net Charges: Recommendations

Clarify in VA guidance:

- ▲ The types of aid “provided for the sole purpose” of tuition and fees and “directly to the institution”
- ▲ Policies for schools, sponsors and other aid sources regarding potentially overlapping requirements
- ▲ Policies regarding other military agency funded aid

Modify VA’s current “overpayment” policy

- ▲ Current policy may jeopardize veterans’ academic progress
- ▲ In order to avoid an overpayment situation, veterans might opt to fail a class rather than withdraw

# Communications

- ▲ Schools have as many as three departments involved in the processing of Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit payments:
  - (School) Veterans Services Office
  - Office of Student Financial Aid
  - Registrar's Office
  
- ▲ Consider designating a single point-of-contact at your campus and vest that person with the authority to drop/add courses, approve financial aid awards, and advise/counsel veteran students

# Institutional Responsibilities

- ▲ School responsibilities for the Post-9/11 GI Bill include:
  - ❑ Keeping VA informed of enrollment status of veterans and other eligible persons
  - ❑ Keeping the State Approving Agency informed
  - ❑ Keeping up-to-date on VA programs, policies and procedures
  - ❑ Maintenance of records and making such records available for inspection
  
- ▲ VA flyer on School Responsibilities:  
[www.gibill.va.gov/documents/Post-911\\_School\\_Responsibilities.pdf](http://www.gibill.va.gov/documents/Post-911_School_Responsibilities.pdf)



# Administrative Capability

- ▲ The VA's regulations have administrative capability requirements (38 CFR 21.4266(a)(1)) just like in Title IV regulations (34 CFR 668.16)
- ▲ VA's definition of administrative capability: "the ability to maintain all records that 21.4209 requires"

# Administrative Capability (continued)

- ▲ Why is administrative capability so important?
  - ❑ Institutions must designate a School Certifying Officer (SCO)
  - ❑ Like Title IV, knowledgeable staff must be available to counsel students (even if you do centralized certification)
- ▲ Cross-disciplinary requirements and needs
  - ❑ More than just veterans education benefits certification
  - ❑ No longer just enrollment verification
  - ❑ Veterans services is cross-disciplinary

# Cross-Disciplinary

- ▲ Essential elements of Veterans Services include:
  - ❑ Student development counseling
  - ❑ Health/psychological counseling
  - ❑ Student career counseling
  - ❑ Academic advising
  - ❑ Financial counseling

# Planning and Implementation

- ▲ Need to intentionally plan and implement true veterans services:
  - ❑ Many schools have developed fully staffed/resourced/budgeted Veterans' Services offices equivalent to other similar student affairs types of offices
  - ❑ Schools need to think intentionally about the development of Veterans' Services in order to effectively serve the diverse and particular needs of this constituency
  - ❑ There is a clear and critical need for Veterans' Services staff to understand billing, student aid, retention theory, student development theory, essentials of counseling psychology and VA regulations

# Summary

The VA, in concert with the SAA and some very dedicated Folks at learning institutions across the Commonwealth has assisted approximately 800K veterans in reaching their educational goals in the last year.

2011 brings significant changes, particularly the \$17,500 caps for active-duty personnel and personnel attending private institutions. Vets attending NCD programs will be eligible for housing as well as the book stipend. Break pay is discontinued for MGIB and Post-9/11 GIB participants. Vets attending grad school at public institutions will have full tuition and fees paid.

Program approval has been streamlined. Accreditation is the singular criterion for non-profit schools.

VA encourages schools to embrace veteran students in the same manner as schools have sought to include other underrepresented groups in the past. Assisting vets in achieving their scholastic goals benefits all stakeholders.

**Questions?**

**Thank you for sharing in the  
success of the daughters  
and sons of America!**