



# Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 The "Forever GI Bill"

## Overview

- The Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act, also known as the "Forever GI Bill," was signed into law on August 16, 2017. The law will allow more Veterans and service members to qualify for the GI Bill and more time in which to use it. Some of the changes go into effect immediately, and some go into effect at later dates as listed below.

## Effective 16 August 2017:

- Removal of Delimiting Date. Service members whose last day of Active Duty is on or after 1 January 2013 and Fry Scholarship recipients who become eligible on or after 1 January 2013 no longer have a delimiting date (their Post-9/11 GI Bill will never expire).
- Reserve Education Assistance Program (REAP). Service Members who lost eligibility for REAP (Ch. 1607) due to the REAP Sunset may now convert unused months to the Post-9/11 GI Bill.
- Independent Study Programs. Service members who are eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill can now use their GI Bill benefits for Independent Study programs.

## Effective 1 January 2018:

- Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA). The MHA for students who use their Post-9/11 GI Bill for the first time on or after 1 January 2018 will increase or decrease with BAH rates.
  - Students who used their Post-9/11 GI Bill BEFORE 1 January 2018 will not have MHA decreased if BAH decreases.

## Effective 1 August 2018:

- Qualifying Periods of Service. Title 10 Sections 12301(h), 12304a, and 12304b are qualifying service for Post-9/11 GI Bill.
  - 12301(h) service on or after 11 September 2001.
  - 12304a and 12304b service on or after 30 June 2008.
  - Payments for Service and eligibility for TEB will begin 1 August 2018.
- Transfer of Education Benefit (TEB).
  - Service members can re-transfer Post-9/11 benefits if the original dependent dies, even after the service member separates; applies to deaths on/after 1 August 2009.
  - Dependents can re-transfer Post-9/11 benefits if the transferor dies and they have remaining months; applies to deaths on or after 1 August 2009.
- Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA).
  - MHA based on campus where attending.
  - MHA is pro-rated and may be paid for days in a month the service member is not serving on active duty.
- Purple Heart Recipients. Purple Heart recipients eligible at 100% payment tier.
- Yellow Ribbon. Fry Scholarship and Purple Heart recipients eligible for Yellow Ribbon Program.
- License and Certification. Entitlement charge for License and Certification tests are pro-rated.
- Institution Closures. Service members may recover some benefits when the institution they are attending closes on or after 16 August 2017.

### Effective 1 August 2018: (continued)

- Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance. Students using Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (Chapter 35) who enroll after 1 August 2018 are limited to 36 months of benefits. Payments under Chapter 35 increase on 1 October 2018.
- Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment. Title 10, Sections 12304a and 12304b are qualifying service for Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Chapter 31).

### Effective 1 August 2019:

- Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship.
  - Adds up to an additional 9 months of benefits after exhausting Post-9/11.
  - Maximum payment \$30K.
  - Cannot be transferred.

### Effective 1 August 2020:

- Payment Tiers.
  - 40% payment tier is eliminated.
  - 90 days to 6 months of service eligible for 50% payment tier.
  - 6 months to 18 months of service eligible for 60% payment tier.

### Effective 1 August 2022:

- Yellow Ribbon. Service members on active duty are eligible for Yellow Ribbon.

### Other Changes:

- VA High Technology Pilot Program.
  - Opportunity to enroll in High Tech programs.
  - VA determines eligible skills and training based on employer input.
  - Can use Chapters 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 1606, or 1607.
- VA will use automated and electronic processing as much as possible.
- Work Study program continued.
- Schools must report whether they allow priority enrollment for Veterans
- VA will provide information to schools about all GI Bill programs a Veteran or service member is entitled to. Student may opt out.
- School Certifying Officials must be trained by VA.
- VA will provide counseling on selected campuses.
- Various agencies must provide GI Bill use data reports to Congress.
- Increase in payments to State Approving Agencies.

### For More Information:

- Visit [www.benefits.va.gov/gibill](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill)
- Contact your State Education Office [ng.wa.waarnng.list.per-education@mail.mil](mailto:ng.wa.waarnng.list.per-education@mail.mil)

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