



THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON

Dear Higher Education Executive,

On June 30th, 2008, President George W. Bush signed into law the Post 9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008, the most comprehensive education benefits package since the original GI Bill was signed into law in 1944. The original GI Bill provided millions of veterans the opportunity to become active participants in revitalizing the American dream through their engagement in higher education. We have a collective obligation to extend those same opportunities to the men and women who volunteer to bravely serve in today's military and to defend the freedoms we so enjoy. This letter provides a brief overview of these new benefits and is intended to assist you in preparing to serve our veterans as honorably as they have served us.

Basic Eligibility

Veterans who served at least 90 days on active duty after September 10, 2001, are entitled to these new benefits. Those who served at least 36 months on active duty are entitled to the maximum benefit, while those who served less time are eligible for a percentage of the full benefit based on length of service.

Benefits

Eligible veterans enrolled full-time are entitled to a tuition benefit, monthly housing allowance, and a yearly books and supplies stipend. The tuition benefit covers up to the highest in-state undergraduate tuition at a public institution of higher learning. The monthly housing allowance is based on military housing benefit rates and the location of the receiving institution. Active duty members, veterans enrolled half-time or less, and veterans enrolled in distance education programs are not eligible for the housing allowance. The maximum yearly books and supplies stipend is \$1000.

The Yellow Ribbon Program

The Yellow Ribbon Program provision of the Post-9/11 GI Bill allows institutions to enter into agreement with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to fund tuition costs above the highest in-state undergraduate tuition rate. Only individuals who qualify for the Post-9/11 GI Bill based on 36 months of service, or who were discharged due to a service-connected disability after serving 30 continuous days after September 10, 2001, are eligible for increased benefits under the Yellow Ribbon Program. VA will match each additional dollar that an institution contributes toward an eligible student's tuition costs, up to 50 percent of the difference between the student's tuition benefit and the total cost of tuition and mandatory fees.

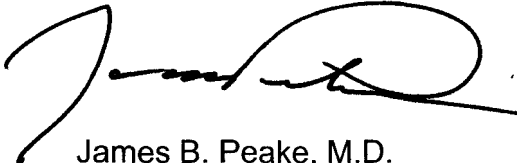
Implementation

VA is working closely with the higher education community to ensure the smoothest possible implementation of these new benefits. We anticipate that proposed regulations will be issued in early December.

Institutional representatives will also have the opportunity to attend one of three regional meetings hosted by VA and the American Council on Education. The meetings will be held during January 2009 and are tentatively scheduled to be held in Los Angeles, CA; Washington, DC; and Chicago, IL. We look forward to this opportunity to speak with campus practitioners about this new program. Registration information will be provided in the coming weeks.

We hope that this information will assist you in planning for the implementation of the Post-9/11 GI Bill and the Yellow Ribbon Program. We are confident that together we can provide the best educational opportunities possible for service members, veterans, and their dependents. For more information, please visit www.GIBILL.VA.gov, or email questions about the Yellow Ribbon Program to our Yellow Ribbon corporate mailbox at yellow.ribbon@va.gov.

Sincerely yours,



James B. Peake, M.D.