

December 1, 2022

U.S. Senator Jon Tester, Chair
Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
412 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

U.S. Senator Jerry Moran, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
412 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

U.S. Representative Mark Takano, Chair
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
364 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

U.S. Representative Mike Bost, Ranking Member
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
364 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Tester, Ranking Member Moran, Chair Takano, and Ranking Member Bost:

On behalf of the associations below, representing two- and four-year public and private colleges and universities, we write in support of H.R. 7939, the Student Veteran Emergency Relief Act, legislation containing important provisions to help colleges and universities better serve their student veteran and military-connected populations. In September, H.R. 7939 passed the House with strong bipartisan support and we urge the committees to move the legislation through to final passage before the end of the year.

Among its provisions, H.R. 7939 would make permanent a number of important flexibilities provided to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) during the COVID-19 pandemic. These changes will help ensure that the VA has the necessary tools to prevent a disruption of VA education benefits during a future national emergency.

H.R. 7939 also provides important flexibility that would allow veterans to use their GI bill benefits to participate in a wider number of study abroad programs. We appreciate the inclusion of this provision, which will make study abroad possible for many more veterans over the next five years. We look forward to working with Congress to permanently extend these flexibilities in the future.

Finally, section 13 of the bill provides a critical technical correction to provide relief to colleges and universities with flat tuition and fee structures from unnecessary and burdensome enrollment verification processes. We appreciate Congress' continued efforts to make its intent clear and trust that these minor changes will ensure that the VA can now properly implement the law.

College and universities greatly appreciate the Committees' leadership and commitment to ensuring that veterans have access to a high-quality postsecondary education and thank you again for passage of the Ensuring the Best Schools for Veterans Act, which addresses concerns with the VA's recent policy interpretation of the 85-15 rule. We hope that H.R. 7939 can be swiftly passed before Congress adjourns for the year, and we look forward to supporting you in those efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ted Mitchell". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Ted Mitchell
President

On behalf of:

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
American Association of Community Colleges
American Council on Education
Association of American Universities
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
NAFSA: Association of International Educators
National Association of College and University Business Officers
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
National Association of Veterans' Program Administrators
State Higher Education Executive Officers Association