

# The Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 *(The Forever GI Bill)*

*Presenter*  
*Rafael A. Lozano*



## ***What we will be covering today***

- **Lifts 15-Year Time Limit To Use GI Bill**
- **More Guard, Reserve Members Now Eligible**
- **Expands Benefit to All Purple Heart Recipients**
- **Makes Changes To Dependents' Benefits**
- **Restores Benefits If College Closes**
- **Some Minor Payment Differences**
- **STEM Classes**
- **High Technology Pilot Program**
- **Minor Housing Allowance Changes**
- **New GI Bill Recipients Will Get A Smaller Housing Allowance**
- **What This Means For You**
- **More Guard, Reserve Members Now Eligible**



## ***Lifts 15-Year Time Limit To Use GI Bill***

- The legislation eliminates the current 15-year time limit on use of the Post-9/11 GI Bill for those who were discharged on or after **Jan. 1, 2013**. This means that if you are a recent veteran you have forever to use up all your GI Bill benefit!
- This removal of the 15-year time limit also applies to surviving dependents using the Fry Scholarship. Surviving spouses and children who first became eligible after Jan. 1, 2013 will have no time limit to use their Fry Scholarship benefits.



## ***More Guard/Reserve Members Now Eligible For Benefits***

- Reservists called to active duty under sections 12304(a) (when a governor requests federal assistance in responding to a major disaster or emergency), or 12304(b) (when the DoD mobilizes reservists in support of a combatant command) are now eligible. Previously, only reservists called to active duty by presidential order as a result of a national emergency were eligible. This applies to all reservists mobilized after Aug. 1, 2009, but reservists can receive payment only for classes that start after Aug. 1, 2018.
- Reservists who were receiving REAP payments may now be eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Currently, there are less than 4,000 people eligible for this benefit.



## *Expands Benefit to All Purple Heart Recipients*

Anybody who receives a Purple Heart will get the full GI Bill amount no matter how long they served on active duty.

## *Makes Changes To Dependents' Benefits*

- **Fry Scholarship**

All [Fry Scholarship](#) recipients are now eligible for the [Yellow Ribbon Program](#).

Dependents' Education Assistance (DEA)

[Dependents' Education Assistance \(DEA\)](#) monthly payments will increase by about 50 percent, **but the maximum number of months that a dependent can get DEA decreases from 45 to 36. This is effective Aug. 1, 2018.**

- **Transferred Benefits Changes**

Some changes will be made to the rules about [transferring the Post-9/11 GI Bill](#) to make it easier to reallocate transferred benefits if the sponsor or dependent passes away.



# Benefit Tiers

Currently, your GI Bill benefits are based on the amount of active-duty time you have. If you have less than 36 months active duty, you may get less than the full amount of GI Bill benefits.

Service Requirements on/after 9/11/01 an individual must serve an aggregate of	Payment Tiers Percentage
At least 36 cumulative months	100%
At least 30 continuous days on active duty and discharged due to service-connected disability	100%
At least 30 cumulative months	90%
At least 24 cumulative months	80%
*At least 18 cumulative months	70%
*At least 12 cumulative months	60%
*At least 6 cumulative months	50%
*At least 90 aggregate days	40%

The new law makes some minor changes to this - specifically people that serve at least 90 days but less than 6 months on active duty will see their benefits increase from 40 percent to 50 percent of the maximum amount payable, **people who serve at least 6 months but less than 12 months will see their benefits increase from 50 percent to 60 percent of the maximum amount payable. This results in at least \$2,000 more annually in tuition for most people in those benefit tiers.**



# *Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM programs)*

## **STEM Scholarship**

There is a big push these days to get veterans enrolled in STEM programs.

This program will pay veterans **up to \$30,000** if they are enrolled in a STEM program, **have used up** all their GI Bill benefits, and have at least 60 semester/90 quarter hours credit toward a STEM degree. It also will pay those who already have a STEM degree and are working on a teaching certification. **This is effective Aug. 1, 2018.**



# *High Technology Pilot Program*

The new law also creates a High Technology Pilot Program that covers the full cost of high technology training not necessarily offered by a school. **The details are sketchy, but the law says it is for people otherwise eligible under the GI Bill.** Trainees will get the normal monthly housing allowance payments, and the VA has to monitor the companies giving the training to ensure the training results in gainful employment. **This isn't scheduled to start until Spring 2019.**





# ***Minor Housing Allowance Changes***

Housing allowance will be based on the campus location where you attend classes, not necessarily the main campus. **Reservists who are mobilized in the middle of a month will have their GI Bill housing allowance prorated.** The previous law would stop the GI Bill housing allowance for the entire month if you were called up for at least one day during any month of school attendance, and no matter what day of the month you were mobilized on.

## **New GI Bill Recipients Will Get A Smaller Housing Allowance**

There was a little-noticed provision in the 2015 military budget that slows the rate of increase in Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) so that active-duty BAH no longer pays the full amount of the housing cost. **This new law changes that. Effective Jan. 1, 2018.**

Source: GI Bill; <https://benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/FGIBCommunications.asp>



## ***What This Means For Veterans and Dependents***

- If you are a **veteran** who was discharged before Jan. 1, 2013 you will see no changes, you still have 15 years to use your GI Bill and your housing allowance will remain unchanged.
- If you are a **veteran** who was discharged AFTER Jan. 1, 2013, you now have forever to use your GI Bill benefits. Your housing allowance will also remain at the higher rate.
- If you are on **active duty**, have never used your GI Bill and will be discharged on or after Jan. 1, 2018, you have forever to use your GI Bill, BUT your housing allowance will be at the lower rate (approximately \$100 less per month), UNLESS you start using your GI Bill before the end of the year.
- If you are a **dependent** monthly payments **will increase by about 50 percent**, but the maximum number of months that a dependent can get DEA decreases from 45 to 36. **This is effective Aug. 1, 2018.** [Fry Scholarship](#) recipients are now eligible for the [Yellow Ribbon Program](#). Changes will be made to the rules about [transferring the Post-9/11 GI Bill](#) to make it easier to reallocate transferred benefits if the sponsor or dependent **passes away**.



## ***Other Common Questions:***

- ***Academic Standing***
- ***Debt Collection***
- ***Financial Aid***
- ***Tuition Waivers***



# *Resources*

## **GI Bill WEB Site**

<https://benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/FGIBCommunications.asp>

## **School Certifying Officials Handbook**

[http://www.gibill.va.gov/documents/job\\_aids/SCndbooO\\_Hak\\_v2.pdf](http://www.gibill.va.gov/documents/job_aids/SCndbooO_Hak_v2.pdf)

## **VA Work-Study**

<http://www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/wkstud.htm#INTRO>

## **WAVES Handbook**

[http://www.gibill.va.gov/school\\_info/rpo\\_hbook/waves\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.gibill.va.gov/school_info/rpo_hbook/waves_handbook.pdf)

# Questions?



# Thank You

