

Altmire Revamps G.I. Bill for Today's Veterans

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Under the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act (Post-9/11 G.I. Bill - H.R. 5740), Pennsylvanians currently serving in the military -- who have completed more than three months of active duty service since September 11, 2001 -- would qualify for a maximum educational benefit of \$23,846 a year, which includes \$12,164 for tuition, \$1,000 for books and \$1,186 for living expenses.

This is a dramatic increase over the current G.I. Bill's maximum education benefit of \$9,990 a year. In 2007, 12,389 Pennsylvania veterans used the G.I. Bill to pursue higher education.

"In the 1940s, the heroes of World War II used the G.I. bill to further their education and usher America into a new era of prosperity," Altmire said. "Given the dramatic increase in college tuition over the past 60 years, we need to revamp the G.I. Bill to ensure our newest generation of veterans have the same opportunity. Investing in veterans' education is a critical part of honoring our commitment to stand by those who have fought for our country."

The Post-9/11 G.I. Bill provides veterans with a maximum education benefit equal to the cost of in-state tuition at the most expensive public university and the cost of living for their area. Reservists and national guardsmen would qualify for full educational benefits after serving three years and would receive a pro-rated portion of the benefits before that.

For veterans who choose to attend a more expensive, private university, the bill creates a program through which the government would match, dollar for dollar, any supplemental financial assistance given to veterans by their schools. Veterans would also have up to 15 years, rather than the 10 years currently allowed, in which to use their educational assistance. This will ensure men and women serving multiple deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan do not run out of time to use the bill's benefits.

"The Post-9/11 G.I. Bill shows our men and women in uniform that America is committed to investing in their future," said John Getz Jr., the Pennsylvania State Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. "This legislation will help countless veterans go to college who otherwise could not afford it. By introducing this bill, Congressman Altmire has once again taken action to improve the lives of America's heroes."

Approximately 7.8 million veterans used the G.I. bill after World War II. For every dollar invested in veterans' education, seven dollars were generated for America's economy. Three former presidents, a dozen U.S. Senators, three Supreme Court justices, and fourteen Nobel Prize winners went to school through the G.I. Bill.