



# G.I. Bill gets improved benefits

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WASHINGTON – Combat Veteran and U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth joined Senate Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Johnny Isakson (R-GA) and Ranking Member Jon Tester (D-MT) to introduce bipartisan legislation to expand the post-9/11 G.I. Bill and improve benefits provided to those who have served this nation in uniform—our Veterans. The Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 would be the most significant expansion of G.I. benefits since the post-9/11 G.I. bill was passed. It would expand eligibility for G.I. benefits to cover more Veterans, Purple Heart recipients, surviving spouses and their children. It would also eliminate arbitrary restrictions and restore benefits to students whose schools close while they are enrolled.

“The Post-9/11 G.I. Bill was one of the most significant achievements Congress passed in a generation. It has helped service members, veterans and their family members attend college and get an education that helps them get good-paying jobs. I myself received a degree through the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill and my husband transferred his benefit to our daughter Abigail,” said Duckworth. “I’m proud to join my colleagues in introducing legislation to improve the program and help repay all those who have sacrificed for this great nation.”

The bipartisan legislation would eliminate time restrictions on G.I. benefits, allowing Veterans to use their benefits beyond the current 15 year arbitrary time limit. It would also increase G.I. Bill payments by \$2,300 annually to Veterans with less than 12 months of active service and expand eligibility by granting full G.I. benefits to Purple Heart recipients, reservists undergoing medical care and to reservists mobilized in support of combatant commands or in response to a major disaster or emergency. A one-page summary of the legislation is available [here](#).

Since recovering in Walter Reed, Duckworth has devoted her life to serving Veterans and Servicemembers. She served in the Reserve Forces for 23 years, as the Director of the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs and the Assistant Secretary for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in Washington. Last year, she was a vocal critic of an effort to cut the Veterans’ Post 9-11 G.I. Bill, defeating a push to cut the educational

benefits Veterans are allowed to transfer to their children by calling on her colleagues to honor the promises made to the men and women who serve in our Armed Forces.

The legislation is named after Harry Walter Colmery, a Veteran of the Army Air Service and a former national commander of the American Legion. Colmery drafted the original G.I. Bill in 1944 to help World War II Veterans transition back into civilian life.