

Attorney General Raoul Asks U.S. Supreme Court To Protect Veterans' Rights

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CHICAGO - Attorney General Kwame Raoul today, as part of a bipartisan coalition of 33 attorneys general, asked the Supreme Court of the United States to hear an important case in order to protect veterans' rights to their hard-earned benefits.

“The men and women who have served in the military deserve our recognition and support for the sacrifices they and their families have made to protect our nation,” Raoul said. “That’s why I am proud to be a part of this bipartisan coalition asking that the U.S. Supreme Court ensure that veterans get the benefits they have earned.

James Rudisill, the plaintiff in the case, is a Virginia resident and a decorated army veteran of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. After his first tour, Mr. Rudisill used benefits to which he was then entitled under the Montgomery GI Bill to further his education, successfully complete his undergraduate degree, and return to the U.S. Army as a commissioned officer. Mr. Rudisill served his country bravely and received one of the military’s highest accolades, the Bronze Star, for his service. Following his third tour, Mr. Rudisill was accepted into the Yale Divinity School, with the goal of returning to the armed forces yet again, this time as a chaplain. Because Mr. Rudisill had now served multiple additional tours of duty, including after September 11, 2001, he sought to use educational benefits to which he was entitled under the new Post-9/11 GI Bill.

But the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) denied Mr. Rudisill his Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits, despite the fact that veterans with multiple requisite periods of service, like Mr. Rudisill, can earn up to 48 months of educational benefits. A federal court of appeals ultimately upheld that decision, depriving thousands of veterans of the GI benefits that they earned while serving their country in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In [the brief](#) filed today, Raoul and the coalition ask the Supreme Court to hear the case, *Rudisill v. McDonough*, and reverse the court of appeals’ decision. The attorneys general argue that Congress intended to provide veterans expansive educational benefits and that courts should take a pro-veteran approach when interpreting any ambiguity in statutes enacted to benefit veterans.

Attorney General Raoul was joined in filing the brief by the attorneys general of Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming.