



**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

PO BOX 4616
BUFFALO, NY 14240

February 21, 2011

Dear Student:

As you may be aware, President Obama signed the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-377) on January 4, 2011. **These changes have a significant impact on how you may use your education benefits, including Montgomery GI Bill, Post-9/11 GI Bill, REAP, etc.** Please review the updates carefully to see how they may affect you. Some of the most significant changes in the law include the following:

- Monthly housing allowance benefits are prorated based upon rate of pursuit, rounded to the nearest multiple of 10 (effective August 1, 2011), for example:
 - If you are enrolled in 9 credits when 12 credits is full time, your rate of pursuit is .75 and you will receive 80% of the applicable Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rate.
 - If you are enrolled in 10 credits when 12 credits is full time, your rate of pursuit is .83 and you will also receive 80% of the applicable BAH rate.
- Break or interval pay is no longer payable under any VA education benefit program unless under an Executive Order of the President or due to an emergency situation such as a natural disaster or strike (effective August 1, 2011)
 - Here's an example: Your semester ends December 15th. Your housing allowance is paid for the first 15 days of December only. Your next semester begins January 10th. Your payment for January, received in February, will be for January 10th and the rest of January.
 - Entitlement that previously would have been used for break pay will be available for use during a future enrollment.
- Individuals utilizing benefits while on active duty will be subject to the same benefit level determinations as veterans, based upon the amount of aggregate active duty service accrued (effective March 5, 2011)

- Tuition and fee payments are simplified for those attending public schools, and a national yearly maximum is created for those enrolled in private or foreign schools (effective August 1, 2011)
 - Individual state caps are removed; all net public in-state charges are covered
 - Private and foreign school costs are capped at \$17,500 annually
 - The Yellow Ribbon Program may be used for costs in excess of the cap
- Students can be reimbursed for more than one "licensing and certification" test, and can also be reimbursed for fees paid to take national exams used for admission to an institution of higher learning such as the SAT, ACT, GMAT, LSAT, etc. (effective August 1, 2011)
- VA will pay Montgomery GI Bill and Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve kickers on a monthly basis instead of a lump sum basis at the beginning of the term (effective August 1, 2011)
- Expanding the Post-9/11 GI Bill to include Active Service performed by National Guard members under title 32 U.S.C. for the purpose of organizing, administering, recruiting, instructing, or training the National Guard; or under section 502(f) for the purpose of responding to a national emergency (VA will begin paying benefits on October 1, 2011; you may be paid retroactively for enrollments beginning on August 1, 2009)
- Allows individuals who are eligible for both Chapter 31-Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment benefits and Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to choose the Post-9/11 GI Bill's monthly housing allowance instead of the Chapter 31 subsistence allowance (effective August 1, 2011)
- Students can use Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits for non-college degree programs such as on-the-job training, flight school programs (other than a private pilot license), apprenticeship training, correspondence courses, and other programs offered at non-degree schools (effective October 1, 2011)
- Monthly housing allowance benefits are payable to students (other than those on active duty) enrolled solely in distance learning, at one-half the national average BAH for an E-5 with dependents (effective October 1, 2011)
- The books and supplies stipend can be paid to students attending school while on active duty (effective October 1, 2011)

I hope that this information will assist you in planning for your future. For a complete listing of all the changes to VA education programs, as well as the latest information, please visit our website at www.gibill.va.gov.

Sincerely,

KEITH M. WILSON
 Director
 Education Service