

HR 4625

Protect the GI Bill Act

Congress: 116 (2019–2021, Ended)

Chamber: House

Policy Area: Armed Forces and National Security

Introduced: Oct 8, 2019

Current Status: Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Latest Action: Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. (Nov 13, 2019)

Official Text: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/4625>

Sponsor

Name: Rep. Levin, Mike [D-CA-49]

Party: Democratic • **State:** CA • **Chamber:** House

Cosponsors (1 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Rep. Cohen, Steve [D-TN-9]	D · TN		Nov 12, 2019

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Veterans' Affairs Committee	House	Discharged from	Oct 16, 2019
Veterans' Affairs Committee	Senate	Referred To	Nov 13, 2019

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

Armed Forces and National Security

Related Bills

Bill	Relationship	Last Action
116 HR 4654	Related bill	Oct 11, 2019: Referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.
116 HR 4312	Related bill	Sep 24, 2019: Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity.

Protect the GI Bill Act

This bill makes various updates to the administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) educational assistance programs.

(Sec. 2) First, the bill specifies that educational assistance is payable for programs of education leading to a degree that is pursued on active duty if the active duty is for a period of more than 30 days.

(Sec. 3) The VA shall require each educational institution to submit monthly verification of each individual who is enrolled in a course or program of education and receiving educational assistance. Individuals must also submit a monthly verification of enrollment. If an individual fails to verify for two consecutive months, the VA may not make a monthly stipend payment until the individual submits such verification.

(Sec. 4) The bill expands the list of dependents that qualify as eligible dependents for purposes of transfer of education benefits under the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program. Under the bill, an individual may transfer an entitlement to educational assistance to an eligible dependent or combination of eligible dependents.

(Sec. 5) The bill also expands the reasons for which a course of education may be disapproved in relation to VA education benefits. Specifically, a program offered by an educational institution that is at risk of losing accreditation shall not be deemed approved.

(Sec. 6) The bill requires the VA to notify a state approving agency when certain actions or events take place, such as final punitive action being taken against an educational institution. Additionally, the state approving agency must provide notice to the VA and other state approving agencies if it disapproves or suspends an educational institution.

(Sec. 7) In order to approve an accredited program, the VA (or state approving agency) must find the educational institution is approved and participates in a federal student financial aid program (or has had such requirement waived).

(Sec. 8) The bill requires certain non-accredited law programs to be accredited by a specialized accrediting agency in order to be approved for the administration of educational benefits.

The bill permits the approval of certain non-accredited courses related to the practice of law if such courses are accredited by a specialized accrediting agency recognized by the Department of Education.

(Sec. 9) The bill provides that an approved course that fails to comply with a risk-based survey requirement shall be immediately disapproved by the VA or state approving agency.

(Sec. 10) The bill limits participation in VA educational assistance programs if an educational institution (1) does not perform specified actions, such as providing estimated cost information to individuals prior to enrollment; (2) implements deceptive recruiting techniques or pays inducements to secure enrollments; or (3) is the subject of a negative action by its accrediting agency. The state approving agency or the VA may impose limitations by publishing a warning or temporarily prohibiting the pursuit of a course of education at an institution.

The bill provides for waivers of certain requirements for a one-year period, but waivers may not be provided for more than two consecutive academic years.

(Sec. 11) The bill provides that overpayments made by an educational institution to a veteran or eligible person shall constitute a liability of the educational institution if the payment is made as a payment of established charges to educational institutions, advance payment of initial educational assistance or subsistence allowance, or a public-private contribution for additional education assistance.

(Sec. 12) The bill also prohibits the VA or a state approving agency from approving the enrollment of an eligible veteran or eligible person in any course offered by an institution engaged in substantial misrepresentation (e.g., misrepresenting the size, location, facilities, or equipment of the institution).

The bill modifies the criteria that non-accredited courses must meet to be eligible for educational assistance. The bill adds requirements for (1) the educational institution offering the course to refrain from substantial misrepresentation; (2) the state approving agency to review advertising, sales, or enrollment materials used by the institution; and (3) the state approving agency to verify that no federal department or agency has taken a punitive action against the school for misleading or deceptive practices.

(Sec. 13) After a state or federal department or agency takes final punitive action against an educational institution for substantial misrepresentation, the bill authorizes the VA or state approving agency to (1) publish a warning or temporarily prohibit the pursuit of a course of education at an institution, or (2) disapprove each course offered by that institution.

(Sec. 14) Under the bill, an individual enrolled in a course or program of education that closed or was discontinued who transfers fewer than 12 credits from such a program shall be deemed to not have received such credits and shall not have their entitlement to educational assistance charged during that period of enrollment.

Actions Timeline

- **Nov 13, 2019:** Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.
- **Nov 12, 2019:** Mr. Takano moved to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.
- **Nov 12, 2019:** Considered under suspension of the rules. (consideration: CR H8746-8751)
- **Nov 12, 2019:** DEBATE - The House proceeded with forty minutes of debate on H.R. 4625.
- **Nov 12, 2019:** Passed/agreed to in House: On motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended Agreed to by voice vote.(text: CR H8746-8749)
- **Nov 12, 2019:** On motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended Agreed to by voice vote. (text: CR H8746-8749)
- **Nov 12, 2019:** Motion to reconsider laid on the table Agreed to without objection.
- **Oct 16, 2019:** Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity Discharged.
- **Oct 16, 2019:** Committee Consideration and Mark-up Session Held.
- **Oct 16, 2019:** Ordered to be Reported (Amended) by Voice Vote.
- **Oct 14, 2019:** Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity.
- **Oct 8, 2019:** Introduced in House
- **Oct 8, 2019:** Referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.