

***President Obama Signs Executive Order Supporting
Service Members, Veterans, Military Spouses, and Their Families***

Earlier today, I had the great privilege of joining the President and First Lady -- along with an amazing 10,000 soldiers, military families, and veterans -- at an extraordinary event in Fort Stewart, Georgia, home to the Army's famed 3rd Infantry Division.

The President and First Lady traveled to Fort Stewart to meet with soldiers and families -- and to sign an Executive Order that will positively impact the educational benefits and opportunities for our nation's heroes and their families -- for a long time to come. (See <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/04/26/we-can-t-wait-president-obama-takes-action-st>)

We know from travels throughout the country -- and through feedback from veterans, our troops and their families -- that education is a big deal.

Opportunities provided through educational programs such as the Post 9/11 GI Bill open doors, and I know that on a personal level. Like many service members, I have used the benefits of the Post- 9/11 GI Bill to further my education -- and that of my children.

At Fort Stewart, the President renewed his commitment to fully fund the post-9/11 GI Bill. With that bill -- and the Tuition Assistance program -- more than 550,000 veterans and 325,000 service members pursued education last year. Additionally, nearly 38,000 military spouses used their Military Spouse Career Advancement Account (MyCAA) benefit to advance their education.

But sometimes... navigating through the maze of schools and opportunities can be a challenge. Many service members, veterans and families know exactly what I mean. They go online to try and find the best school that fits their goals; they end up on a website that looks official; they get promised to get connected with a program looks promising. Unfortunately -- and all-too-often -- our troops and families find themselves dealing with folks who aren't interested in helping them find the BEST program -- but they are happy to take their money. Our service men and women may get forced into making a quick decision. And sometimes recruiters from these schools show up on bases.

As the President said, one of the worst examples of this is a college recruiter who visited Camp Lejeune and enrolled Marines impacted by Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI) -- the nature and severity of their injuries were so significant, that the affected Marines couldn't remember the courses The recruiter signed them up for -- but that didn't stop the recruiter. That's just wrong.

But practices like that -- and so many others -- will be coming to an end as a result of today's order signed by the President.

In short, the EO is designed to combat unscrupulous practices used by schools to gain access to the military/veteran education benefits; it protects the full range of military/veteran education benefits

programs, including Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits, the Tuition Assistance program, and MyCAA; and, its provisions focus on ensuring students have the proper information, support, and protections they need to make informed decisions about their educational options.

Here's what the EO delivers for our veterans, military service members, spouses and their families:

- * Provide students with educational and financial information to make informed decisions. The EO will require institutions to provide prospective military and veteran students with the Administration's Financial Aid Shopping Sheet ("Know Before You Owe") to help students understand the total cost and quality of their education, including: tuition and fees, the availability of federal financial aid, estimated student loan debt upon graduation, and information about student outcomes like graduation rates.

- * End fraudulent and aggressive recruiting techniques on and off military installations. The EO will require that VA and DoD improve their oversight of improper recruiting practices so that they are consistent with the regulations already in place at ED for title IV Federal student aid programs. The Principles of Excellence will also establish and strengthen solicitation rules to reduce access to military bases for bad actors.

- * Ensure support services for service-members and veterans. The EO will provide military and veteran students with clear educational plans, academic and financial aid counseling services with staff that are familiar with VA and DOD programs, and the ability to more easily re-enroll and receive a refund if they must leave school for service-related reasons.

- * Develop and collect service member- and veteran-specific student outcome data. The EO will require DoD, VA, and ED to develop student outcome measures, such as completion rates, and collect data to be made available on Ed's College Navigator website. DoD, VA, and Ed will also improve data collection regarding which schools veterans are selecting to use their education benefits.

- * Create a centralized complaint system for students receiving military and veterans' educational benefits. The EO require DoD and VA, in consultation with ED, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), and DOJ, to create a centralized complaint system for students receiving military and veterans' educational benefits to register complaints against educational institutions. Additionally, VA's State Approving Agencies will receive and process these complaints and share these complaints with appropriate federal and state agencies.

- * Begin the process to trademark the term "GI Bill." The EO will require the VA to initiate a process to trademark the term "GI Bill" and other steps to curb websites and programs that deceptively market veterans' educational benefits. Today's signing by the President is a BIG step forward in preserving -- and enhancing -- the educational opportunities for those who have served, as well as their families.

Brad Cooper is the Executive Director of Joining Forces Related Topics include:

Education (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/issues/education>)

[_Veterans_ \(http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/issues/veterans\)](http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/issues/veterans)

If you no longer wish to receive e-mail from us, please click [_here_](#)

(<http://capwiz.com/vva/lmx/u/?jobid=209601236&queueid=8220542476>) .

Christopher M. Kreiger Sr.

Iraq War Veteran

President/Co-Founder

WNYHeroes, Inc

2809 Wehrle Dr. Suite#8

Williamsville, N.Y 14221

716-261-5751 (c)

716-630-5020

716-630-5023 Fax

www.WNYHeroes.Org