

17 July 2017

From: Edward H. Hill, CAPT USN (ret) & Heidi B. Hill

To: Congressman Raul R. Labrador

Subj: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SHAUNA HILL POST 9-11 EDUCATION BENEFITS TRANSERABILITY ACT

The Post 9-11 GI Bill is a fantastic benefit that our country has provided to its veterans. We felt very fortunate to have this opportunity, with the plan to assign the education benefits to my daughter Shauna. We lost our beautiful Shauna due to an automobile accident on December 10, 2012. She suffered in intensive care until December 20th, when upon declaration of her being brain dead, we proceeded with an organ donation process. Her heart, kidneys and liver were provided to six recipients. We have met the heart recipient and to this day have a relationship with the young lady and her family. Shauna has left quite a legacy.

After Shauna's loss, I attempted to transfer the Post 9-11 Education benefits to my other daughter Haley. The VA said I was unable to do this. Apparently, I needed to allocate at least some ratio of benefits to every possible beneficiary if I wanted to change any allocation ratios later. This was not communicated at the time of my retirement. It was unclear why they would not make this simple change. The bureaucratic machine would not budge, so I decided to contact Congressman Raul Labrador to see if there was an alternative solution. The feedback from Congressman Raul Labrador's staff was nothing could be done. They communicated to me that the whole process seemed contrary to the best interests of the veterans and it made no sense that the policy of the assignment of benefits could be so unyielding. I appreciated their efforts and thanked them. I had no inclination that there would be any resolution to this issue and assumed that these benefits were lost to me permanently.

Some months ago I was informed of the bill that Congressman Labrador was going to submit to Congress. I was very pleased to hear this as now this bureaucratic policy could be reevaluated and modified to help other veterans that might befall a similar tragedy and also suffer the inability to transfer their benefits. My other daughter has graduated college, so there is no reassignment available for our family, but there is an opportunity to fix this for another deserving veteran family. With all the challenges facing veterans that served in the conflicts over the last 15 years, it is paramount we do everything we can to do what is right for these great Americans and their families and the sacrifices they made.

My most heartfelt thanks to Congressman Labrador and his staff for all their hard work in making this bill happen. I appreciate it and all my fellow veteran brothers and sisters do too.

Very respectfully,

Edward H. Hill, CAPT USN (ret)