

March 20, 2024

Chairperson, honorable members of the committee,

My name is Gregory John and I am the President of Infinity Flight, one of the largest flight training organizations in the country based at Trenton-Mercer Airport in New Jersey. We collaborate with Mercer County College to provide veterans with an opportunity to become professional airline pilots, a lucrative, in-demand career path. Today, I stand before you to express my unwavering support for the proposed language in H.R. 7613 that would implement a lifetime cap of \$100,000, adjusted for inflation, on veterans' entitlement use for flight training fees at public institutions of higher learning.

The proposed cap is not only a financial safeguard, but a strategic move toward creating a more equitable, efficient, and responsible system for utilizing the educational benefits earned by veterans. By setting a clear limit, we are helping to ensure these benefits are used in a manner that maximizes veterans' success in the civilian workforce, while protecting the integrity of the GI Bill against exploitation.

Further, implementing a lifetime cap encourages training programs to prioritize quality, safety, and effectiveness. In the Mercer County College program, we have seen firsthand how clear, defined boundaries foster an environment where every flight hour and every training opportunity is utilized to its fullest potential. This focus on quality over quantity of

flight hours ensures that veterans receive the best possible education and training, preparing them for successful careers in aviation.

Additionally, the cap addresses a critical issue that has plagued the system for too long: the misuse of VA funds through what has been termed the "blank-check loophole," which has allowed bad-actor institutions to inflate the cost of flight training, charging the VA far beyond the amount necessary for a quality education. By setting a flight fee cap, Congress will put an end to this exploitation, ensuring VA funds are used responsibly and more veterans have access to flight-training opportunities without the risk of unnecessary financial waste.

In my opinion, establishing the inflation-adjusted cap at \$100,000 is appropriate based on the actual cost of obtaining a comprehensive flight education. Furthermore, applying the cap exclusively to programs offered by public institutions of higher learning encourages veterans to pursue their education at institutions already benefitting from an array of existing governance safeguards, ensuring financial protections for both the veteran and the GI Bill, as well as the delivery of a high-quality education.

In conclusion, I urge Congress to adopt this language into law. It represents a balanced, thoughtful approach to supporting our veterans' educational aspirations, while safeguarding the resources dedicated to their success. Let us honor their service by ensuring that their path to a new career in aviation is both secure and fruitful.

Thank you for considering my testimony on this critical matter. I am confident that, together, we can make a positive change that benefits our veterans, the aviation industry, and the nation as a whole.