



**WRITTEN TESTIMONY
SUBMITTED TO THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
119TH CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION**

March 11, 2025

Chairman Van Orden, Ranking Member Pappas, and Members of the Subcommittee:

We thank you for the opportunity to share this statement for the record to be considered during this hearing, which includes many notable bills addressing topics in higher education and veterans' education benefits. Veterans Education Success is a nonprofit organization with the mission of working on a bipartisan basis, advancing higher education success for veterans, service members, and military families, and protecting the integrity and promise of the GI Bill® and other federal education programs.

In this statement, we address the following legislative proposals: a draft bill amending 38 U.S.C. § 3107, the *Modernizing the Veterans On-Campus Experience Act of 2025*, a draft bill amending 38 U.S.C. § 3327, the *Veterans Readiness and Employment Transparency Act of 2025*, the *Reforming Education for Veterans Act*, the *Streamlining Aviation for Eligible "SAFE" Veterans Act of 2025*, and the *VETS Opportunity Act of 2025*.

Before we turn to the legislation at hand, the news of staffing cuts at VA demand our attention. Echoing Chairman Bost's statement last week, we are anxious to understand the impact of these staffing cuts on VA's ability to deliver services to veterans, especially the GI Bill. We urge the Subcommittee to make inquiries to VA about its ability to ensure veterans receive the benefits to which they are statutorily entitled. We hope the Subcommittee will request data on the impact of these changes and what steps VA is taking to ensure the Secretary's promise to improve support for veterans is met. We recall the 2014 wait times problem at VA that demanded this Subcommittee's attention and the attention of all VSOs, and we would appreciate the opportunity to collaborate with the Subcommittee on efforts to ensure that veterans' benefits are not delayed.

We applaud the Subcommittee's dedication to our Nation's veterans and look forward to working closely with the staff members on the advancement of many of these important topics for broader consideration.

DRAFT BILL, VETS Opportunity Act of 2025

The Veterans Education and Technical Skills Opportunity Act of 2025, or "VETS Opportunity Act," would modify the criteria for approval of certain independent study programs. Specifically, the bill seeks to amend 38 U.S.C. §3680A(a)(4)(B)(iii)(II) to add, as an exception to the prohibition against independent study programs, for-profit programs that do not lead to a standard college degree or to a certificate at an institution of higher learning.

We very strongly urge the Subcommittee to set aside this legislation and undertake further analysis. The rationale and actual need for this legislation are unclear, and the current proposal would pose dangerous unintended consequences to student veterans.

Some proponents of this legislation contend it is needed so that “hybrid programs” – defined as programs offered as a combination of online and resident training – at for-profit institutions may be approved, but this argument is fundamentally flawed and misleading. §3680A(a)(4) already allows hybrid standard college degree and certificate programs at all types of institutions of higher learning, including for-profit schools. Therefore, the proposed amendments to §3680(A) are unnecessary for providing access to hybrid programs at for-profit institutions.

Beyond being unnecessary, the bill, as currently drafted, poses very serious risks to taxpayers and student veterans by opening up the GI Bill to waste, fraud, and abuse. Specifically, the changes proposed would open up the GI Bill to a subset of so-called independent study programs that were wisely excluded when §3680A was last amended, due to the exploitative nature and lack of accountability of such programs.¹ The exclusion of those programs was extensively considered and agreed upon by overwhelmingly bipartisan Congressional majorities as part of the passage of the Forever GI Bill in 2017. The reason for bipartisan agreement on this issue previously was to safeguard the GI Bill from waste, fraud, and abuse. Undoing that bipartisan consensus now would appear to be reckless.

Moreover, a very recent law should have already clarified any question about online college access to the GI Bill. Specifically, the *Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act*, passed in the last Congress, makes it clear that online programs are to be considered as “independent study” in the context of Title 38 standards.² The goal of those standards is to ensure that online education programs meet the conditions of accredited and standard college degree programs or the conditions set out for VA’s existing online high technology programs.

While we acknowledge and appreciate the inclusion of the caveat that approval of a course of study would be contingent upon a program offering “regular and substantive interaction between students and instructors,” we do maintain concerns overall. We would also support the inclusion of this provision as an update to 38 U.S.C. §3672A. Unfortunately, many student veterans have experienced the minimal value that online courses offer, especially when the program consists of little more than YouTube videos, which they could have easily accessed on their own at no cost.³

¹ Public Law 115-48, Section 302, <https://www.congress.gov/115/statute/STATUTE-131/STATUTE-131-Pg973.pdf>

² Public Law 118-210, “*Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act*,” See Section 212. 118th Congress, 2nd Session (2024), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/8371>.

³ Veterans Education Success. “*Our Written Testimony: Legislative Priorities Submitted to the Senate and House Committees on Veterans Affairs 2025*,” See page 5. (Feb. 25, 2025). <https://vetsedsuccess.org/our-written-testimony-legislative-priorities-submitted-to-the-senate-and-house-committees-on-veterans-affairs-2025/>.

One student veteran had this to share about their experience:

“There are issues such as the school replaying free web seminars as their own training and using unqualified people to lead the classes. They literally go to Youtube, find the free course by someone else, then they play that during the ZOOM meeting and call it training. Everything they are doing could have been done by me for free... They also attempted on two occasions to place me in classes that are not part of the program and do not serve a purpose except to show me in class...”⁴

We further acknowledge the inclusion of the language that a school must be “approved to participate or participating in the student financial assistance programs authorized by title IV of that Act.” We believe this language is a positive improvement from previous iterations of the bill, which would have required a school only to be “qualified to participate” in Title IV.⁵

We strongly oppose this legislation and request the opportunity to meet with the sponsors to discuss this further. We encourage the Subcommittee not to advance it for additional consideration at this time.

DRAFT BILL, Reforming Education for Veterans Act

This bill would seek to codify certain policies for GI Bill students during periods of military service, including the requirement that institutions maintain a leave of absence policy during military service. It would also decrease the number of compliance surveys for educational institutions that have multiple locations and mandate timely updates to the school certifying officials (SCO) handbook.

We support the intended goal of Section 2 to improve protections for student veterans who are mobilized for a period of military service, but request the Subcommittee to set this aside because these protections are already enshrined in two separate pieces of legislation: the *Isakson-Roe Act*, which conditions eligibility for VA funds on similar accommodations, and the *Higher Education Opportunity Act*, which requires all Title IV institutions to accommodate servicemembers when they are activated.^{6,7}

⁴ Veterans Education Success. *Statement for the record: Legislative priorities submitted to the Senate and House Committees on Veterans' Affairs, 118th Congress, second session.* (Mar. 13, 2024). <https://vetsedsuccess.org/statement-for-the-record-legislative-priorities-submitted-to-the-senate-and-house-committees-on-veterans-affairs-2024/>.

⁵ *Id.* See page 6.

⁶ Public Law 116-315, Section 1018 stipulates institutions must, “maintain a policy that (i) ensures that members of the Armed Forces, including the reserve components and the National Guard, who enroll in a course of education at the educational institution may be readmitted at such institution if such members are temporarily unavailable or have to suspend such enrollment by reason of serving in the Armed Forces; and (ii) otherwise accommodates such members during short absences by reason of such service.”

⁷ Public Law 110-315, Section 487 stipulates institutions must, “Any student whose absence from an institution of higher education is necessitated by reason of service in the uniformed services shall be entitled to readmission to the institution of higher education if (A) the student (or an appropriate officer of the Armed Forces or official of the Department of Defense) gives advance written or verbal notice of such service to the appropriate official at the institution of higher education; (B) the cumulative length of the absence and of all previous absences from that institution of higher education by reason of service in the uniformed services does not exceed five years; and (C) except as otherwise provided in this section, the student submits a notification of intent to reenroll in the institution of higher education in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (4).

We are concerned that the enactment of yet a third piece of legislation mandating essentially the same accommodations is not only redundant, but also could lead to confusion and complicate compliance.

We urge the Subcommittee to abandon Section 3, which proposes limiting annual compliance surveys at multi-campus institutions to no more than one compliance survey. Multi-campus institutions are the largest source of student veteran complaints and the site of the vast majority of problems with the GI Bill. Student veteran and whistleblower complaints about “chain schools” typically raise concerns about different campus locations under the chain umbrella, not just one campus. We are alarmed at the notion of allowing such venues to skip a compliance survey.

As we have previously reported, some of the lowest-quality schools receive the most GI Bill funding, most of which are multi-campus operations. Our research found that, from 2009 to 2017, eight of the 10 schools receiving the most Post-9/11 GI Bill funds accounted for 20% of all GI Bill payments, amounting to \$34.7 billion.⁸ Even more concerning, seven of these 10 schools, all multi-campus chains, had high numbers of student veteran complaints and had faced law enforcement actions over allegations of deceptive advertising, predatory recruiting, and fraudulent loan schemes.⁹

These multi-campus chains also spent less than one-third of the tuition they charged VA in 2017 actually educating the veterans, instead siphoning off the GI Bill to pay for marketing schemes and executive perquisites. Not surprisingly, these multi-campus chains struggled with student outcomes: Less than 28% of their students completed a degree, and only half earned more than a high school graduate.¹⁰

In other words, bad actors are wasting GI Bill funding and defrauding VA and veterans, and this legislation would only serve to exacerbate those challenges further.¹¹ The language, as proposed, would be a giveaway to college chains that operate many locations. Conditions at one campus location do not necessarily reflect the circumstances of other campuses, and even aggregating data across multiple campuses can mask subpar conditions that fall below the compliance thresholds.

⁸ Veterans Education Success. *Schools Receiving the Most Post-9/11 GI Bill Tuition and Fee Payments Since 2009* (Mar. 2018). <https://vetsedsuccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/gi-bill-cumulative-revenue-brief-2.pdf>.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ Veterans Education Success. *Should Colleges Spend the GI Bill on Veterans' Education or Late Night TV Ads? And Which Colleges Offer the Best Instructional Bang for the GI Bill Buck?* (2019), <https://vetsedsuccess.org/should-colleges-spend-the-gi-bill-on-veterans-education-or-late-night-tv-ads-and-which-colleges-offer-the-best-instructional-bang-for-the-gi-bill-buck/>.

¹¹ See also U.S. Dept. of Education, Federal Student Aid Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Report (2024), <https://studentaid.gov/sites/default/files/fy2024-fsa-annual-report.pdf>, (p. 140-143) (“FSA also received a disproportionate number of complaints from predominantly online schools. FSA received 2,764 complaints (23%) about schools where more than 80% enrolled exclusively online. In contrast, these schools accounted for only 9% of enrollment in Title IV-eligible schools during the 2023-24 school year...”).

Ensuring compliance by every campus branch is important to protecting student veterans and the GI Bill. Compliance burdens are the price that institutions voluntarily accept in exchange for eligibility for GI Bill funds. We believe VA should ensure that all venues enrolling veterans are in compliance with the requirements that Congress has seen fit to impose on institutional participants.

Section 4 of the bill would ensure timely updates to SCOs, who are oftentimes the frontline support for student veterans on campus. Ensuring they have the most current guidance, consistent with the statute and intent of Congress, is critical to the proper functioning of GI Bill benefits. We support Section 4 of the bill, and would support the inclusion of this provision in future legislation.

DRAFT BILL, Streamlining Aviation for Eligible "SAFE" Veterans Act of 2025 (Flight Training)

This bill would amend 38 U.S.C. § 3104 by modifying the approval requirements for training programs under VA's Veteran Readiness & Employment (VR&E) program. Specifically, it would allow VA to approve flight training programs that are not tied to a degree-granting institution. While we recognize the intent to expand career options for veterans, we are concerned that this change removes existing safeguards without ensuring that veterans will garner meaningful employment outcomes.

We urge Subcommittee members to strongly consider the long history of scandals associated with flight schools. A former Chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, Rep. Jeff Miller, famously stated, "The GI Bill flight school loophole is so big you could fly a 747 through it," after some flight programs were discovered to be "gouging taxpayers with exorbitant tuition expenses..."¹²

The lengthy history associated with flight schools is notable, as the scope and scale of the abuse resulted in bipartisan support from lawmakers to cap program costs, which we supported in testimony.¹³ Rep. Brad Wenstrup championed the effort to reduce the sky-high flight school costs, introducing the *GI Bill Education Quality Enhancement Act of 2015*.¹⁴

A representative from The American Legion explained the importance of the bill, noting, "We know the road to ruin for the GI Bill begins when we forego our responsibility to ensure it's an honorable investment of our public dollars."¹⁵ Similarly, a spokesman for Student Veterans of America stated, "Veterans who desire a career in aviation should be able to achieve those goals, and not at the expense of the sustainability of the GI Bill."¹⁶

¹² Chris Harress, "GI Bill flight school benefits could be slashed by Congress amid tuition loophole controversy," International Business Times. (Feb. 9, 2016). <https://www.ibtimes.com/gi-bill-flight-school-benefits-could-be-slashed-congress-amid-tuition-loophole-2294612>.

¹³ Veterans Education Success. Statement for the Record. (Oct. 11, 2017). <https://vetsedsuccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/VES-SFR-HVAC-Flight-Training-Schools.pdf>.

¹⁴ *GI Bill Education Quality Enhancement Act of 2015*, H.R. 476, 114th Cong. (2015). <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/476/text>.

¹⁵ Wentling, N. "Congressmen consider proposal to slash GI Bill flight school benefits. Stars and Stripes," (Oct. 11, 2017). <https://www.stripes.com/news/congressmen-consider-proposal-to-slash-gi-bill-flight-school-benefits-1.492095>.

¹⁶ *Id.*

Representatives from the Department of Veterans Affairs expressed their concerns to this Subcommittee, noting that, according to their VA data, “one student was charged more than \$534,000 in fiscal 2014 – a cost footed by taxpayers.”¹⁷

VR&E exists to help veterans with service-connected disabilities obtain sustainable careers, and its funding should support training that leads to viable employment. Flight training programs are widely known to vary in cost and effectiveness. Without job placement data or clear pathways to employment, veterans could be left with training that does not translate into a career. We have previously reported how subpar colleges aggressively recruit veterans into programs that ultimately leave them ineligible for the careers they sought.¹⁸ This bill raises similar concerns, particularly given the aviation industry’s strict FAA medical and certification requirements. A veteran who completes flight training only to later find they cannot meet the FAA’s medical and certification requirements may be left without a career path and no way to recover their used benefits.

Current law offers suitable protections and should be maintained. The current requirement is that flight training be affiliated with a degree program at a properly accredited institution. This provides an important protection of oversight, ensuring a minimum standard of programmatic accountability, because accredited colleges will not approve partnerships with subpar flight schools that do not meet the minimum standards. By expanding eligibility to flight programs not affiliated with a properly accredited degree institution, this legislation removes those protections without establishing new ways to ensure program quality, cost-effectiveness, or employment viability.

This legislation poses significant risks to the population of disabled veterans who are interested in flight careers, but may be unaware of certain eligibility requirements for that career field. We appreciate the Subcommittee’s attention to this issue and look forward to working together to ensure that VR&E remains a strong and effective pathway to meaningful employment for veterans.

DRAFT BILL, Guard and Reserve GI Bill Parity Act of 2025

This bill would expand Post-9/11 Educational Assistance eligibility to include National Guard Members performing active duty service. It broadens the definition of qualifying service to encompass various active and training duties as specified in Titles 10 and 32, and applies these provisions retroactively to service since September 11, 2001. The amendments will take effect one year after enactment.

The current law mandates that Guard and Reserve Members must have served at least 90 cumulative or 30 continuous days on active duty to accrue “qualifying days,” creating a disadvantage in accessing their deserved GI Bill educational benefits. Despite the obligation for reserve component members to “serve in uniform” and fulfill duty responsibilities for a minimum of 39 non-consecutive days each fiscal year, these periods of service do not contribute toward Post-9/11 GI Bill eligibility.

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ Veterans Education Success, “*Despite a 2016 Statute, the GI Bill Still Pays for Degrees that Don’t Lead to A Job*,” (Apr. 2018), <https://vetsedsuccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/2018-career-ready-act-update.pdf>.

This discrepancy disadvantages reserve component members compared to their active component counterparts. While active duty members can receive Post-9/11 GI Bill credit for a training day, reservists currently cannot receive credit for the same service. The increased reliance on reserve capabilities has underscored the necessity for component interoperability. Unfortunately, the strides made in achieving interoperability have not been complemented by fair recognition and rewards for the skills and efforts required.

An Operational Assessment of Reserve Component Forces in Afghanistan, conducted by the Institute for Defense Analyses, revealed no discernible difference in performance between components in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.¹⁹ The study emphasizes that reserve forces were fulfilling their assigned tasks without significant variations from their active-duty counterparts. The shared burden and risk between both components highlight the importance of acknowledging the contributions of Guard and Reserve members.

To address this disparity, we strongly urge the Subcommittee to count all paid points days of Reserve and National Guard service members towards receiving the Post-9/11 GI Bill.²⁰ This encompasses days for training, active military service, inactive training, and general duty. This adjustment aims to ensure equitable treatment, recognizing the crucial contributions of reserve component members to military readiness. It is essential to promote fairness and acknowledge their vital role without compromising the integrity of the GI Bill system.

We also applaud this legislation for applying retroactively and that it would apply to all service performed on or after September 11, 2001. We appreciate the strong bipartisan support for this legislation, and are especially grateful to Ranking Member Takano, Rep. Mike Levin, and Rep. Trent Kelly for their stewardship of this legislation. We look forward to seeing this bill advance.

DRAFT BILL, Amending 38 U.S.C. § 3107 – Individualized VR&E Plan Review

This bill seeks to refine the review process for individualized Veteran Readiness & Employment (VR&E) plans under 38 U.S.C. § 3107, ensuring that plan redevelopment is based on clear, employment-related factors rather than broad discretionary determinations. The proposed changes would require the Secretary to justify plan modifications based on changes in a veteran's employment barrier or an increased likelihood of success under an alternative plan.

We conceptually support these changes as a reasonable step toward improving transparency and accountability in the VR&E program. A transparent plan review process, as proposed in this bill, can help reduce stress on veterans and improve the overall effectiveness of VR&E. Veterans contacting us continue to report confusing and inconsistent guidance from VR&E counselors, and we have long raised concerns that the process for securing VR&E benefits is often overly complex and stressful. Many veterans grow frustrated with arbitrary decision-making, including counselors steering them away from high-quality colleges with excellent veteran support and towards low-quality subpar programs or imposing inconsistent approval standards.

¹⁹ Joseph Adams, et al, Institute for Defense Analyses, Sharing Burden and Risk in another Theater: An Operational Assessment of Reserve Component Forces in Afghanistan, Paper P-8177 (Sep. 2018), <https://www.ida.org/research-and-publications/publications/all/s/sh/sharing-burden-and-risk-in-another-theater-an-operational-assessment-of-reserve-component-forces-in-afghanistan>.

²⁰ The term "paid points days" refers to days in which a service member receives credit in both retirement points and monetary compensation for that day of service. This is to differentiate between time served merely for points, such as off-duty education, versus time served for points and pay, such as a regular duty day.

By requiring VA to provide clear, employment-based justification for any modifications to a veteran's rehabilitation plan, this bill strengthens predictability and fairness in the program.

We would like to draw the Subcommittee's attention to a concern with the bill: As presently drafted, the bill could allow for an increase in plan modification requests without ensuring that changes are based on factors essential to a veteran's long-term employability. Instead, we recommend a more structured approach to ensure that plan changes are tied to a veteran's service-connected disability, a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor's (VRC) determination that the original goal is no longer the best approach, or economic conditions that limit employment opportunities. However, we urge the Subcommittee to ensure that VA still maintains the ability to disapprove vocational goal changes when truly necessary.

Additionally, we encourage the Subcommittee to continue oversight of the VR&E program to ensure that these improvements translate into actual benefits for veterans. We support this proposal in principle, but recommend working closely with VA to ensure that the final language balances veteran flexibility and the goals of this proposal. We thank the Subcommittee for considering this bill and look forward to continued collaboration on this issue.

DRAFT BILL, Modernizing the Veterans On-Campus Experience Act of 2025

This bill would amend counselor requirements for educational and vocational counseling provided through VA's VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC) program. It strikes the mandate that "such counseling services shall be provided by employees of the Department who provide such services under section 3697A [of Title 38]".

This flexibility could help address the issue of limited resources at some institutions, ensuring that more veterans can access these services regardless of their location and the limitations inherent to the requirement of being a VA employee.

However, while we support this legislation in principle, we believe the legislation needs additional guardrails. We strongly recommend the addition of clear requirements and standards for counselors who are not VA employees. Additionally, we strongly recommend limiting the use of outside counselors to public or non-profit entities, who do not have a financial interest in the relationship, as a for-profit entity naturally would.

Finally, previous iterations of this legislation²¹ included a cap of 25 individuals a counselor could serve, a requirement that we supported.²² Limiting the total clients per counselor would help to maintain the quality and effectiveness of the counseling services, ensuring that each veteran receives personalized attention.

²¹ 118th Congress, Second Session. "H.R.8646 - Modernizing the Veterans On-Campus Experience Act of 2024," (Jun. 5, 2024). <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/8646>.

²² Veterans Education Success, "Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity Legislative Hearing on Pending Legislation," Statement for the Record. See page 4. (Jun. 12, 2024). <https://vetsedsuccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Statement-For-the-Record-June-12th-Legislative-Hearing-Veterans-Education-Success.pdf>.

DRAFT BILL, Amending 38 U.S.C. § 3327 – Return of Buy-In Funds

This bill modifies 38 U.S.C. § 3327(f)(3) by adjusting the timing of lump-sum payments for service members who contribute additional funds toward educational assistance under Chapter 30. Specifically, it strikes the language that previously required these payments to occur before the exhaustion of entitlement, “together with the last payment of the monthly stipend payable to the individual under paragraph (1)(B) of section 3313(c) of this title, or under paragraphs (2) through (7) of that section (as applicable).”

We support this legislation as a practical change that provides greater financial predictability for student veterans. Previously, individuals could access their lump-sum contribution only at the end of their entitlement period, creating uncertainty; for those who have not, or will not, fully exhaust their benefits, they are never able to receive the payment. By decoupling this payment from the exhaustion of benefits, the bill ensures that GI Bill beneficiaries may receive their additional assistance more appropriately.

However, successful implementation will depend on clear guidance from VA regarding the exact timing and process for disbursement. If VA determines that lump-sum payments are to be made automatically at an earlier point, this could require adjustments to VA’s payment processing systems. Additionally, beneficiaries must receive clear communication to avoid confusion about when and how they can expect their funds. We would encourage the Subcommittee to mandate VA to clearly articulate this through the Digital GI Bill platform.

We appreciate the Subcommittee’s focus on improving the administration of GI Bill benefits and look forward to working together to ensure effective implementation of this policy.

DRAFT BILL, Veterans Readiness and Employment Transparency Act of 2025

The Veterans Readiness and Employment Transparency Act of 2025 seeks to improve access to information and support for veterans using the Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) program. The bill would establish a direct hotline for veterans to inquire about VR&E, mandate more proactive community outreach efforts by VR&E, require an annual report on select program extension metrics, and establish a 30-day deadline for VA to process extension requests. These provisions are intended to improve transparency and efficiency, ensuring that veterans receive clearer guidance on their benefits and additional support in some areas.

We support this legislation as a step toward increasing accountability and accessibility in VR&E. Too often, veterans report difficulty navigating the program, struggling to get clear answers from VA or waiting too long for key decisions that affect their ability to complete their training. Establishing a dedicated point of contact for VR&E questions will help veterans get the information they need to make timely decisions. Additionally, requiring VA to conduct monthly Q&A sessions with school certifying officials and provide regular briefings at educational institutions will help address institutional confusion and misunderstandings about VR&E eligibility and benefits.

We also recognize the value of requiring annual reporting on program extensions, and have previously testified to the importance of data and transparency at VA.²³ Veterans may request extensions for legitimate reasons, such as unforeseen medical issues or program delays outside of their control. Tracking approvals and denials would provide Congress the ability to assess whether veterans are receiving appropriate consideration by VR&E counselors.

The most significant technical challenge in the legislation may be the requirement that VA process all VR&E extension requests within 30 days. While reducing wait times is critical, VA must be properly resourced to meet this deadline. Without sufficient staffing and administrative capacity, the requirement could lead to counselors arriving at rushed decisions, potentially counter to the interests of the veteran. We have previously testified that there must be more counselors for the numbers of veterans who need VR&E and that the ratio of counselor to veterans should be lower.²⁴

Overall, we believe this legislation takes meaningful steps toward improving veterans' experience with VR&E, and applaud Rep. Abe Hamadeh for sponsoring the bill. We appreciate the Subcommittee's focus on increasing transparency and efficiency in the program and look forward to working together to achieve a positive outcome with this proposal. We also urge the Subcommittee's attention to adequate staffing at VR&E.

Conclusion

Veterans Education Success sincerely appreciates the opportunity to express our views before this Subcommittee. We look forward to the discussion and review of these proposals, and we are grateful for the continued opportunities to collaborate on these topics.

²³ Veterans Education Success. "Our Written Testimony: Legislative Priorities Submitted to the Senate and House Committees on Veterans Affairs 2025," See pages 13-16, (Feb. 25, 2025). <https://vetsedsuccess.org/our-written-testimony-legislative-priorities-submitted-to-the-senate-and-house-committees-on-veterans-affairs-2025/>.

²⁴ Veterans Education Success. *Statement for the record: Legislative priorities submitted to the Senate and House Committees on Veterans' Affairs, 118th Congress, second session.* (Mar. 13, 2024). <https://vetsedsuccess.org/statement-for-the-record-legislative-priorities-submitted-to-the-senate-and-house-committees-on-veterans-affairs-2024/>.

Information Required by Rule XI2(g)(5) of the House of Representatives

Pursuant to Rule XI2(g)(5) of the House of Representatives, Veterans Education Success has not received any federal grants in Fiscal Year 2025, nor has it received any federal grants in the two previous Fiscal Years.

Information Required by P.L. 118-50, Division H, § 2(g)(1)

Pursuant to P.L. 118-50, Division H, § 2(g)(1), Veterans Education Success has not received any contracts, grants, or payments from a foreign government, a foreign adversary-controlled entity, or an entity or country of particular concern, as designated by the Secretary of State.