

**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD
OF
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FOR THE

**UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY**

WITH RESPECT TO

PENDING LEGISLATION

January 21, 2026

Introduction

Chairman Van Orden, Ranking Member Pappas and distinguished members of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, on behalf of the fifty-three-member State agencies of the National Association of State Approving Agencies (NASAA) and their over 220 staff members, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on certain pending legislation.

H.R. 982, Warriors to Workforce Act

In addition to approving standard college degree and non-college degree programs, State approving agencies are responsible for approving apprenticeship (APP), and on-the-job training (OJT) programs for the GI Bill[®]. We are concerned that this important program is being underutilized by our veterans for multiple reasons, one of which is that it is neither promoted nor adequately funded. The result, as pointed out by Chairman Van Orden earlier this year, APP and OJT programs now account for less than one percent of the veterans using the GI Bill, a continual decline over the last decade due to a lack of awareness and inadequate incentive to utilize this benefit to pursue skilled workforce training. For example, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) reports that during FY 2025, only 2,219 Post-9/11 GI Bill beneficiaries began an OJT or apprenticeship program. During the same period, 78,382 individuals began receiving their VA educational benefits while enrolled in undergraduate or graduate degree programs. We believe that the underutilization of this valuable benefit is partially due to lack of veteran awareness as SAAs are not encouraged by VA to promote the program. Although it is specified in 38 CFR § 21.4262(d), VA admits that this benefit has been inadequately promoted and more should be done to ensure veterans are informed of all the potential uses of their GI Bill entitlement. Apprenticeship programs equip veterans with the skills needed to quickly enter the

workforce and lead to high paying careers for those veterans who choose this route. A recent study in North Carolina spoke of critical infrastructure needs and we believe that this only mirrors the situation across our nation. Veterans who wish to use their hearts, hands, and minds to enter technical and vocational fields such as welding, pipefitting, and software development should be encouraged to do so.

Veterans who enroll in an APP or OJT can effectively use their benefits to transition more quickly into the civilian workforce, providing stability for themselves and their families. For this reason, we strongly support H.R.982, *the Warriors to Workforce Act of 2025*, which increases benefits that veterans receive during the first year of an apprenticeship by changing the law so that after 6 months of training, the amount of benefit veterans receive will increase to 90 percent as opposed to the current 80 percent prescribed by law. This change provides a stronger incentive for veterans to use this program, while enhancing the likelihood that they will persist in their training, enter the workforce, and become tax paying citizens in their communities, better able to support themselves and their families. If eligible veterans choose this path, they could join the workforce immediately after transitioning from their military service and not have to wait until they complete a lengthy and costly traditional school program. This route will significantly increase their chance for successful reintegration into civilian life.

Over the past several decades, Congress has increased the financial incentives for veterans to seek a college degree by hundreds of thousands of dollars, but comparatively almost nothing has been done for veterans who seek practical on-the-job training and become part of the workforce that rebuilds the nation's infrastructure. With this increase in their APP/OJT benefit, veterans could be encouraged to join the workforce immediately, thereby securing gainful employment, becoming a tax paying citizen and contributing to their local communities and families. Without the increase to 90% for the second 6 months, veterans are often discouraged from continuing in their program if they must sacrifice losing significant income to support their families, unless they do not receive a commensurate pay increase by the employer at the same time. We suggest that the bill be expanded to provide benefits of 100 percent for the first year and to include adjustments in subsequent years to avoid a significant drop in benefits in the second year of participation. Finally, we would ask for further study about this important benefit to align the program more closely with veteran's needs.

H.R. 5634, Veterans Flight Training Responsibility Act of 2025

H.R. 5634 would amend 38 U.S.C. § 3313 by adding subsection (m) and establishing a maximum total cost ceiling of \$100,000 for flight training for an individual at a public institution, similar to the manner in which flight training is capped at nondegree flight training programs at private institutions. While NASAA supports the intent of this bill to bring parity to flight training, we are concerned that a lifetime cap on such training at public IHLs could potentially have a chilling effect on veterans seeking these programs. Instead, we would suggest applying the private IHL cap to contracted programs at IHLs instead. And we would like to see the cap on vocational flight training increased to bring parity to these schools, instead of placing a cap on already robust in-house degree granting IHL flight programs. Our nation needs more pilots and now is the time to encourage veterans to enroll in quality training programs.

H.R. 5436, To amend title 38, United States Code, to prohibit an educational institution from withholding a transcript from an individual who pursued a course or program of education at such institution using Post-9/11 educational assistance

In July of 2024, the Department of Education implemented regulatory changes that mandated that institutions of higher education could no longer withhold a student's transcript or take other negative actions against a student due to an error on the school's part if that student was receiving Title IV funds. Though many schools withhold transcripts in an attempt to collect outstanding debt from students, for many student veterans, that outstanding debt is often disputed, and in some cases can be a result of school or VA error. As such, NASAA supports this bill which would establish parity for students using their GI Bill education benefits by prohibiting a school from withholding a student's transcript due to outstanding institutional charges.

Information Required by Rule XI2(g)(4) of the House of Representatives

Pursuant to Rule XI2(g)(4) of the House of Representatives, NASAA has not received any federal grants in Fiscal Year 2025, nor has it received any federal grants in the two previous Fiscal Years.

NASAA has not received payments or contracts from any foreign governments in the current year or preceding two calendar years.