

Suspend the Rules and Pass the Bill, H.R. 1458, with An Amendment

(The amendment strikes all after the enacting clause and inserts a new text)

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1458

To amend title 38, United States Code, to modify the criteria for approval of certain independent study programs for purposes of the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 21, 2025

Mr. CISCOMANI (for himself and Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to modify the criteria for approval of certain independent study programs for purposes of the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

4 This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Education
5 and Technical Skills Opportunity Act of 2025” or the
6 “VETS Opportunity Act of 2025”.

1 **SEC. 2. REPAYMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES**
2 **FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS POST-9/11**
3 **EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE: TIMING; MECHA-**
4 **NISM FOR INDIVIDUALS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR A**
5 **MONTHLY HOUSING STIPEND.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (f) of section 3327 of
7 title 38, United States Code, is amended—

8 (1) in paragraph (3), by striking “together”
9 and all that follows through “before” and inserting
10 “not later than 60 days after”; and
11 (2) by adding at the end the following new
12 paragraph:

13 “(4) ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR AN INDIVI-
14 VIDUAL NOT ELIGIBLE FOR A MONTHLY HOUSING
15 STIPEND.—In the case of an individual making an
16 election under subsection (a) who is described by
17 subparagraph (A), (C), or (E) of paragraph (1) of
18 that subsection, and who is not eligible for a month-
19 ly stipend payable under section 3313(c) of this title,
20 the educational assistance payable to the individual
21 under this chapter shall be paid—

22 (A) in a lump sum calculated by multi-
23 plying—

24 (i) the total amount of contributions
25 described in paragraph (1)(A) with regards
26 to such individual; and

1 “(ii) the sum of the number of
2 months described in subclauses (I) and (II)
3 of paragraph (1)(B)(i) with regards to
4 such individual; and
5 “(B) to the individual not later than 60
6 days after the exhaustion of the individual’s en-
7 titlement to educational assistance under this
8 chapter.”.

9 (b) TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS AND CONFORMING
10 AMENDMENT.—Such subsection is further amended—

11 (1) by striking “paragraphs (2) through (7)”
12 and inserting “paragraphs (2) through (6)”; and
13 (2) in paragraph (1), in the heading, by insert-
14 ing “FOR AN INDIVIDUAL ELIGIBLE FOR A MONTHLY
15 HOUSING STIPEND” after “ADDITIONAL ASSIST-
16 ANCE”.

17 (c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
18 this section shall take effect on August 1, 2026.

19 **SEC. 3. TREATMENT OF CERTAIN INDEPENDENT STUDY**
20 **PROGRAMS UNDER EDUCATIONAL ASSIST-**
21 **ANCE PROGRAMS OF DEPARTMENT OF VET-**
22 **ERANS AFFAIRS.**

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3680A(a)(4)(A)(ii)(III) of
24 such title is amended—

1 (1) by inserting “that requires regular and sub-
2 stantive interaction between students and instruc-
3 tors” after “course of study”;

4 (2) in item (aa), by striking “; or” and insert-
5 ing a semicolon;

6 (3) in item (bb), by striking “; and” and insert-
7 ing “; or”; and

8 (4) by adding at the end by following new item:

18 (b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendment made by sub-
19 section (a) shall apply with respect to a quarter, semester,
20 or term, as applicable, that begins on or after August 1,
21 2026.

1 **SEC. 4. ABSENCE FROM CERTAIN EDUCATION DUE TO CER-**

2 **TAIN SERVICE.**

3 (a) OPTIONS.—Section 3691A of such title is amend-
4 ed by striking paragraph (1) of subsection (a) and insert-
5 ing the following:

6 “(1) A covered member may, after receiving orders
7 to enter a period of covered service—

8 “(A) withdraw from covered education;

9 “(B) take a leave of absence from covered edu-
10 cation; or

11 “(C) subject to subsection (d), enter into an
12 agreement with the institution concerned to complete
13 a course of covered education to the satisfaction of
14 such institution concerned.”.

15 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Such subsection is
16 further amended, in paragraph (2)(A), by striking “or
17 takes a leave of absence” and inserting “, takes a leave
18 of absence, or enters into an agreement”.

19 (c) AGREEMENT.—Such section is further amend-
20 ed—

21 (1) by redesignating subsection (d) as sub-
22 section (e); and

23 (2) by inserting, after subsection (c), the fol-
24 lowing new subsection (d):

25 “(d) AGREEMENT WITH INSTITUTION CON-
26 CERNED.—A covered member may enter into an agree-

1 ment under subsection (a) only if the covered member has
2 completed at least half of a course of covered education.”.

3 (d) SECTION HEADING.—Such section is further
4 amended by striking the heading and inserting “**Ab-**
5 **sence from certain education due to certain**
6 **service**”.

7 (e) TABLE OF SECTIONS.—The table of sections at
8 the beginning of chapter 36 of such title is amended by
9 striking the item relating to section 3691A and inserting
10 the following new item:

“3691A. Absence from certain education due to certain service.”.

11 SEC. 5. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS COMPLIANCE

12 SURVEYS.

13 Section 3693 of such title is amended—

14 (1) in subsection (c)—

15 (A) by striking “not more than 10 busi-
16 ness days of notice”;

17 (B) by striking “this section.” and insert-
18 ing “this section—”; and

19 (C) by adding at the end the following new
20 paragraphs:

21 “(1) in the case of an educational institution or
22 training establishment with a time stamp database
23 collection feature, not fewer than 10, and not more
24 than 15, business days of notice; and

1 “(2) in the case of any other educational insti-
2 tution or training establishment, not more than 10
3 business days of notice.”; and

4 (2) by striking subsection (d) and inserting the
5 following new subsection (d):

6 "(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

7 “(1) The terms ‘educational institution’ and
8 ‘training establishment’ have the meanings given
9 such terms in section 3452 of this title.

10 “(2) The term ‘school certifying official’ means
11 an employee of an educational institution with pri-
12 mary responsibility for certifying veteran enrollment
13 at the educational institution.”.

14 SEC. 6. NOTIFICATION OF SCHOOL CERTIFYING OFFICIALS
15 OF HANDBOOK UPDATES.

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 14 business days
17 after updating the school certifying official handbook of
18 the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Secretary of Vet-
19 erans Affairs shall provide notice to all school certifying
20 officials of such update.

21 (b) SCHOOL CERTIFYING OFFICIAL DEFINED.—The
22 term “school certifying official” means an employee of an
23 educational institution with primary responsibility for cer-
24 tifying veteran enrollment at the educational institution.

1 **SEC. 7. EXTENSION OF CERTAIN LIMITS ON PAYMENTS OF**

2 **PENSION.**

3 Section 5503(d)(7) of title 38, United States Code,

4 is amended by striking “January 31, 2033” and inserting

5 “May 31, 2034”.