



TRAGEDY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR SURVIVORS

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March 19, 2018
The Honorable Gus Bilirakis
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Bilirakis:

As the national organization that has provided comfort and care to the families of America's fallen military heroes since 1994, the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) would like to thank you for sponsoring H.R. 4830, the "*Servicemembers Improved Transition through Reforms for Ensuring Progress Act (SITREP)*."

H.R. 4830 would give the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) the ability to disapprove any course of education unless the educational institutions providing the course permit individuals to attend or participate in courses pending payment by the VA and accept a Certificate of Eligibility (COE) as a promise of payment.

For a variety of reasons, VA payments are sometimes delayed. But as a result, many institutions of higher learning sometimes demand payment from the student because of the delayed VA payments. Students receiving these payments are not allowed to attend classes, register for next semester classes or use campus facilities (library, health center) because of payment delay. In some cases, students are put on payment plans they cannot afford or are forced to take out student loans with egregious origination fees in order to continue their education program.

H.R. 4830 would correct this unfair policy, allowing students receiving VA payments to have the same protections as those who receive Title IV funding such as Pell Grants and Federal student loans. Student survivors and veterans should not be financially handicapped because of VA and higher education bureaucracy.

We are most grateful for this important legislation and encourage your colleagues in the House to sign on to cosponsor this bill.

Respectfully,

Bonnie Carroll
Founder and President