

Policy & Legislative Update

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Forever GI Bill-Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017

- Changes MAH to zip code where the majority of a student's classes effective 8/1/18—delayed until 12/1/19
- Up to an additional \$30,000 for STEM degrees with the Edith Norse Rogers scholarship will be effective 8/1/19



Section 107:

Section 107. Calculation of Monthly House Stipend under Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program Based on Location of Campus where Classes are Attended.

This section would change the way living stipend amounts are calculated, from the current rule that says the living stipend payment is based on where the school is located to instead having the payment calculated based on where the student attends the majority of their classes.



VA Updates for Section 107

- Failed IT upgrade prior to effective date of 8/1/18
- Decision to disregard O/P to GI Beneficiaries, shifted focus to underpayments and making veterans whole
- Created Program Integration Office for centralization
- Reset scheduled for 12/1/19 for certifications for spring 2020

VA Updates for Section 107

- IT Contractors in place
 - Development of new software, interfacing with legacy systems, system architecture and testing.
 - Antiquated legacy IT systems w/complicated inter-dependencies
 - MITRE—support and implementation of a program integration strategy. Offered 20 recommendations, half completed
 - 9 more scheduled by 6/30.
 - Final to develop a common testing environment for the IT Systems for implementations estimated completion 9/30
 - Accenture—awarded in February to coordinate planning, developing and testing all associated systems

Section 110:

Section 110. Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship

This section authorizes the VA to provide additional GI Bill funds to help a student veteran complete a STEM degree. They would be eligible to apply for the program, which would pay for the lesser of nine additional months of Post-9/11 GI Bill or a lump sum of \$30,000. The amount of money that could be spent on this program would not exceed \$100,000,000 in any one fiscal year.



VA Updates for Section 110

- Effective 8/1/19
- If currently enrolled in STEM degree program
 - Pursuing a degree in a STEM field
 - Completed at least 60 std/90 qtr credits
 - Exhausted Chpt 33 or will within 180 days of application
 - If degree required >128 semester/192 qtr credit for completion of undergraduate degree

VA Updates for Section 110

- Seeking a Teaching Certification
 - Have earned a degree in a STEM field
 - Accepted or enrolled in a teaching certification program
 - Exhausted Chpt 33 or will within 180 days of application

VA Updates for Section 110

- Priority given to individuals with 100% entitlement and to those who require the most credit hours
- Yellow Ribbon cannot be used with this extension. Schools may apply YR funds, but VA cannot match
- Additional benefits cannot be transferred
- Fry Scholars are eligible to apply for STEM scholarship
- Applications accepted beginning on 8/1/19

Illinois SB 1255—Updates to MIA/POW and IVG Benefits

- Introduced in February 2019, passed Senate on 4/11/19 and currently in House process and was re-referred to House Rules Committee on 5/10/19



IVG Update Highlights

- Potential to transfer IVG benefits to spouse or child
 - 6 yrs AD *and* 2 years of Reserve or IRR
- Changes in eligibility, Section 40(a)(5)
 - Removes paragraph 4 which required service members to return to IL within 6 months of discharge.
 - Allows a veteran who was not an IL resident when entering AD to utilize benefit if they meet service time requirement *and* then becomes an IL resident for 15 continuous years

IVG Update Highlights

- “Qualified dependent” defined for IVG does not allow for step child as the MIA/POW Scholarship statute
 - Potential issue with qualifications section in technicality of “dependent must meet *all* qualifications” and then lists “must be at least 18 years of age but less than 26 years of age”
<Section 40(a)(5)(1)>

IVG Update Highlights

- Allows qualified dependent to receive transfer of benefits for veteran who is not an IL resident at time of application if veteran is 90-100% s/c disability, unemployable based on a total disability, or died as a result of injury or illness directly related to his or her military service.
 - First two as determined by US VA but last does not specify, could become an issue with who has authority and documentation required

Questions?

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