



For God and Country

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December 14, 2010

Honorable Stephanie Herseth Sandlin
331 Cannon House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representative Herseth Sandlin:

On behalf of the 2.4 million members of The American Legion, I am expressing our support for S. 3447, the *Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Improvements Act of 2010*, legislation which expands and improves upon the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill. Most importantly, the new measure expands the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill beyond covering college courses by allowing veterans to use the more generous benefits of this program to cover vocational and technical education at non-degree granting institutions. This will help more veterans get the skills they need to get back in the work force quickly and help get our economy back on track.

The act also expands eligibility for the new G.I. Bill to certain members of the National Guard and Reserve forces activated under Title 32 for domestic emergencies or homeland security missions, or who serve full-time under the Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) program and who were inadvertently left out of the original legislation passed in June 2009. Last year, by Guard estimates, the oversight had denied more than 75,000 Army Guard and 2,500 Air Guard members access to the best veterans' education benefit since World War II. In addition, the bill would provide a living allowance for distance learners, expand and simplify the existing Yellow Ribbon program, reimburse student-veterans taking multiple certification tests and national exams, and allow active duty service members and their spouses to receive a \$1000 per year book stipend, among other things.

The American Legion has a proud history of advocating for veterans' benefits, most notably the contribution to writing and passing the historic *Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944*, commonly known as the "G.I. Bill of Rights." Harry W. Colmery, a former National Commander of the American Legion, is credited with drafting the original language that would become the G.I. Bill. S. 3447 will go far in ensuring that current veterans will be helped as much as the original G.I. Bill helped the Greatest Generation in shaping America. Once again, The American Legion fully supports this legislation and we urge final passage of this bill before the close of the 111th Congress.

Sincerely,

Tim Tetz, Director
National Legislative Commission