



VFW: New GI Bill Will Change Lives

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WASHINGTON — The national commander of the 2.1 million-member Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. and its Auxiliaries called this week's implementation of the new Post-9/11 GI Bill a significant milestone for military servicemembers, their families and the entire country.

"The original World War II GI Bill opened higher education to the masses and produced U.S. presidents, scientists, scholars, and captains of industry who were directly responsible for America's tremendous era of growth and prosperity in the second half of the 20th century," said Glen M. Gardner Jr., a Vietnam veteran from Round Rock, Texas.

"The new 21st century GI Bill will provide today's warrior with that same access to a first class education, and it's all due to the leadership and determination of Sen. Jim Webb (D-Va.)," he said.

"The VFW is proud to have been an early supporter of his landmark legislation through the advocacy work of our Washington Office on Capitol Hill and the grassroots efforts of our members in every congressional district. Education changes lives, which in turn strengthens families and our communities and nation. We are proud to have helped this bill become reality."

The Post-9/11 GI Bill, signed into law by President Bush on June 30, 2008, went into effect Saturday. It provides 36 months of full tuition at every public college or university in the nation, plus fees, books and a housing stipend. It eliminates the \$1,200 enrollment fee, extends the "Use or Lose" time limit from 10 to 15 years, and permits reenlisting servicemembers to transfer some or all of their educational benefits to a spouse or children. It automatically adjusts itself as tuitions and fees increase, greatly enhances the amount paid to Guard and Reserve members, and provides a dollar-for-dollar tuition match to more than 1,100 private schools who chose to participate in the Yellow Ribbon program. The new GI Bill also benefits officers who were commissioned through a military service academy or ROTC program.

"This is a great day for America," said Gardner, whose organization had been advocating for a new GI Bill since 1997.

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"Our servicemen and women who put their lives on hold to voluntarily serve during a time of war have earned our nation's deepest respect and gratitude. The challenge is now for them to take full advantage of the Post-9/11 GI Bill and become the leaders our nation will need for decades to come."

For more information or to enroll in the Post-9/11 GI Bill, go to: <http://www.gibill.va.gov>.