



Tuition Assistance Amendment Passes Senate Thanks to VFW Advocacy

Mar 20, 2013

This afternoon the Senate passed an amendment to the Defense Continuing Resolution, H.R. 933, that will reinstate the military Tuition Assistance, or TA, program under sequestration. The amendment, S. Amdt. 72, was introduced by Sens. James Inhofe, R-Okla., and Kay Hagan, D-N.C., and championed by the VFW, American Legion and Student Veterans of America.

On Monday, VFW Commander-in-Chief John Hamilton sent an “all hands” call to VFW advocates in an effort to muster support for the Inhofe/Hagan amendment. On Monday afternoon, Senate debate over the continuing resolution stalled before the amendment could be considered, leading many on Capitol Hill to believe that hope for restoring TA through the continuing resolution was lost. Inhofe and Hagan quickly scrambled to introduce stand-alone legislation to reinstate TA through S. 614 and a House companion bill, H.R. 1265.

Fortunately, VFW advocacy was unrelenting. In two short days, VFW advocates generated more than 12,000 calls and emails to Senate and House offices from every state, and this morning, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nevada, presented the amendment to the Senate floor without objection. It officially passed through voice vote late in the afternoon.

The Inhofe/Hagan amendment will require each military branch to continue operating their respective TA programs proportionate to the sequester. Currently, the Army, Air Force, Coast Guard and Marine Corps have cut off TA enrollment entirely in an effort to generate greater savings through budget sequestration.

The Marine Corps was the first branch to announce its suspension of TA under sequestration. Since then, the VFW has heard from countless service members across each service wondering what to do next. The VFW has been a longtime proponent of the military’s TA programs and has been working diligently to reinstate and preserve the benefit since the Marine Corps’ announcement.

The Senate will now vote on the full continuing resolution, H.R. 933, to fund the departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs through the remainder of fiscal year 2013.

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Your VFW will keep you posted on our efforts to reinstate military TA as the continuing resolution moves through Congress.

In the meantime, tell your legislators in the House to reinstate TA and thank your Senators for their support all in one step by clicking here.