



## ENLISTED ASSOCIATION OF THE NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES

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### Issues with DOD Education Benefits Portal Mislead GI Bill Troops

**Issue:** The Department of Defense (DOD) is not accurately tracking the eligibility of benefits for Servicemember, and actively misleading Servicemembers.

#### **Background:**

Over the last twelve months the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States has received multiple member requests for help regarding substantially misleading information from DOD.

Servicemembers who used the Montgomery GI Bill and qualify for the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill are currently being told by their commanding officers that they have 72 months of eligibility: 36 from the Montgomery GI Bill, and 36 from the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Furthermore, official documents presented to Servicemembers from DOD state the same: Servicemembers who used their Montgomery GI Bill are continuously promised full, 36 months of Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits, and the ability to transfer 36 months their spouse or children. This information has led members across all branches of the military to believe that they can accumulate a total of 72 months of eligibility.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), however, states that Servicemembers can earn a maximum of 48 months of benefits without exception and will not honor these Servicemembers' 36 months of additional eligibility reported by DOD.

Unfortunately, this misleading information has led many Servicemembers to believe they have additional benefits, and these Servicemembers planned for their families' postsecondary education with these additional benefits in mind. Now their families have enrolled in higher education only to find that VA will not cover the cost, forcing these Servicemembers to pay out-of-pocket, drastically devastating the financial situations of these military families.

#### **Recommendation:**

The Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States recommends:

- The Department of Defense immediately rectify its understanding of VA policy;
- The Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs determine how many Servicemembers have been negatively impacted;
- The Department of Defense notify all Servicemembers affected; and
- That the Department of Veterans Affairs explores the possibility of rectifying the effects of DOD's misinformation by extending full benefits, and the ability to transfer these benefits, to the Servicemember affected.