

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 26, 2019

Washington, D.C. - Today, the Veterans Education Project (VEP) is proud to join with Senators John Boozman (R-AR), John Hoeven (R-ND), and Patrick Leahy (D-VT) in the fight to protect Veterans' benefits. Senators Boozman and Hoeven heard the concerns of VEP and its members and introduced the Montgomery GI Bill Parity Act of 2019. VEP recognizes how important access to education is to members of the Reserve components and National Guard. Allowing members of the Reserve components to utilize the Montgomery Selected Reserve GI Bill and Federal Tuition Assistance concurrently will ensure they reach parity with their Active Duty counterparts. VEP believes in providing all Servicemembers equal access to educational opportunities, and that ignoring this inequity between the Reserve components and their Active Duty counterparts overburdens National Guard Servicemembers attempting to cover the costs of their education. We strongly support the Montgomery GI Bill Parity Act and applaud closing this loophole to increase access to education for Servicemembers of the Reserve Component and the National Guard.

Daniel Elkins, Executive Director with VEP, explained that, "Regardless of duty status, the men and women who choose to put their lives on the line for us all deserve the same benefits and opportunities to further their educational careers and opportunities."

"This bill will remove the unnecessary barrier to education benefits for Guard and Reserve members," Senator Boozman said. "I'm pleased to support this improvement so our men and women in uniform can use the benefits they've earned for their service and sacrifice."

Senator Hoeven went on to explain, "We introduced the Montgomery GI Bill Parity Act to improve access to education benefits for Guard and Reserve members and to ensure that they are able to utilize their benefits in the same way as active duty servicemembers," said Senator Hoeven. "We continue working to pass this legislation because it's all about supporting our Guard and Reserve members and ensuring they have access to the benefits they deserve."

Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), who joined Senators John Hoeven (R-N.D.) and John Boozman (R-Ark.) in introducing the bipartisan bill in April, said: "Our men and women in uniform volunteered to answer our nation's call in many ways. When we promise them benefits and support, we need to fulfill those promises completely, regardless of whether they are full-time or serving in the Guard or Reserves. This bill will help resolve a disparity that was never intended, so that whatever your status, you will get the full amount of educational benefits promised to you."

VEP applauds the efforts of the Senators and urges every member of Congress who cares for Veterans to follow their lead in standing up for equity for all Servicemembers regardless of duty status and pass the Montgomery GI Bill Parity Act of 2019.

VEP works to advance the interests of over a million Soldiers, Airmen, their families, retirees, and survivors. Reflecting the spirit of America in over 3,000 communities across the nation, the men and women of the National Guard serve to defend their nation from threats abroad as well as to respond to natural and manmade disasters in their home state.

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