

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

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

### Background:

Over the last twelve months the Veterans Education Project has received multiple member requests for help regarding substantially misleading information from DOD.

Soldiers 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 soldiers from DOD state the same: soldiers 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 soldiers can earn a maximum of 48 months of benefits without exception, and will not honor these soldiers 36 months of additional eligibility reported by DOD.

Unfortunately this misleading information has led many soldiers to believe they have additional benefits, and these soldiers 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 soldiers to pay out-of-pocket, drastically devastating the financial situations of these military families.

### Recommendation:

The Veterans Education Project recommends:

- The Department of Defense immediately rectify its understanding of VA policy;
- The Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs determine how many soldiers have been negatively impacted;
- The Department of Defense notify all soldiers 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 soldiers affected.