

March 18, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-204, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of the associations listed below, representing the nation's two- and four-year, public and private colleges and universities and the students they serve, I write in strong support of S. 3503, legislation to ensure that veterans can continue to receive their GI bill benefits in situations where campuses are forced to move courses online due to COVID-19. On Monday, the Senate passed this important, bipartisan legislation by unanimous consent and we ask the House to work quickly to take up and pass the bill.

S. 3503 would grant the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) the authority to continue to provide education benefits for veterans when approved programs of education at colleges and universities are moved online due to an emergency or health-related situation. This authority would be available immediately and would extend through December 21, 2020.

In light of coronavirus challenges, many campuses are working quickly to stand up online classroom instruction as a way to protect students and campus communities and limit contagion. However, moving programs of education online has the potential to significantly and negatively impact the ability of veterans to receive GI bill benefits. As just one example, under current Post-9/11 GI Bill rules, student veterans taking courses online typically receive only half the housing allowance of their on-campus peers. Because most veteran students and their families have already made housing arrangements, including signing leases for the current semester or term, a drastic cut in their living expenses would be a considerable hardship during these already difficult times.

We strongly support efforts to ensure that veterans' educational benefits are not impacted by campus efforts to move coursework online in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We know that the uncertainty as to when and how these issues will be addressed is particularly hard on our military-connected students. Therefore, we call on the House leadership to call up and quickly pass the bipartisan Senate legislation. We thank you for your leadership on issues impacting veterans and stand ready to work with you and the VA to address other issues impacting military-connected students during these unprecedented times.

Sincerely,



Ted Mitchell  
President

On behalf of:

ACPA-College Student Educators International  
ACT, Inc.

American Association of Colleges of Nursing  
American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers  
American Association of Community Colleges  
American Association of State Colleges and Universities  
American Association of University Professors  
American College Health Association  
American Council on Education  
American Dental Education Association  
APPA, Leadership in Educational Facilities  
Appalachian College Association  
Association for Biblical Higher Education  
Association of Accredited Naturopathic Medical Colleges  
Association of American Medical Colleges  
Association of American Universities  
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges  
Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities  
Association of Chiropractic Colleges  
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges  
Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities  
Association of Independent Colleges & Universities of Rhode Island  
Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts  
Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Ohio  
Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Pennsylvania  
Association of Independent Colleges of Art & Design  
Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges and Universities  
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities  
Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities  
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities  
Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry  
College and University Professional Association for Human Resources  
Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges  
Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area  
Council for Christian Colleges & Universities  
Council for Higher Education Accreditation  
Council of Graduate Schools  
Council of Independent Colleges  
Council of Independent Colleges in Virginia  
Council on Social Work Education  
EDUCAUSE  
ETS  
Georgia Independent College Association  
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities  
Independent Colleges and Universities of Missouri  
Independent Colleges and Universities of Texas  
Independent Colleges of Indiana  
Independent Colleges of Washington  
Kansas Independent College Association  
Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities  
Maryland Independent College and University Association  
Michigan Independent Colleges & Universities  
Minnesota Private College Council  
NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education

National Association of College and University Business Officers  
National Association of Colleges and Employers  
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities  
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators  
National Association of System Heads  
Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities  
North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities  
Oregon Alliance of Independent Colleges & Universities  
Physician Assistant Education Association  
South Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities  
State Higher Education Executive Officers Association  
TMCF  
UPCEA  
West Virginia Independent Colleges & Universities  
Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities  
Yes We Must Coalition