

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAY 7, 1975

Office of the White House Press Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF LETTERS FROM THE PRESIDENT TO THE  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am transmitting today a proposed bill "To amend title 38, United States Code, to set a termination date for veterans educational benefits under Chapter 34 and 36 of such title, and for other purposes."

The bill would terminate the eligibility period for GI Bill education and training benefits for persons who will be entering peacetime voluntary military service on or after July 1, 1975.

I have today also issued a Proclamation which fixes the period of Vietnam service as beginning on August 5, 1964, and ending on May 7, 1975, for certain wartime benefits.

The effect of these actions is similar to those terminating wartime veterans benefits following the cessation of World War I, World War II, and the Korean War hostilities.

The Proclamation and this legislation would make an equitable distinction between those who have been required to perform military service and those who in the future choose to serve in the All-Volunteer Armed Forces. The termination actions will not affect the eligibility of the millions of Vietnam veterans already discharged, or those presently serving in the Armed Forces.

I urge the Congress to give prompt and favorable consideration to the draft bill.

Sincerely,

GERALD R. FORD

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## A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to set a termination date for veterans educational benefits under chapters 34 and 36 of such title, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That section 1652(a)(1) of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

"(a)(1) The term 'eligible veteran' means any veteran who (A) served on active duty for a period of more than 180 days, any part of which occurred after January 31, 1955, and before July 1, 1975, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable, or (B) was discharged or released from active duty, any part of which was performed during such period, because of a service-connected disability."

SEC. 2. Section 1661(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by ---

(1) inserting ", and before July 1, 1975" immediately after "January 31, 1955" each time it appears; and

(2) adding at the end thereof the following: "In the case of any person in the active military service in the Armed Forces on June 30, 1975, the ending date for computing such person's entitlement shall be the date of such person's first discharge or release after June 30, 1975."

SEC. 3. Section 1662(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end thereof the following: "In no event shall education or training be afforded a veteran under this chapter or chapter 36 of this title after June 30, 1985."

SEC. 4. Section 1695(b) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after "service" the following: ", any part of which occurred after January 31, 1955, and before July 1, 1975,".

SEC. 5. Section 1818(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by deleting "eligible veteran, as defined in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (a) of section 1652 of this title," and inserting in lieu thereof: "person who served on active duty, any part of which occurred after January 31, 1955, and who:

(1) served for a period of more than 180 days and was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable; or

(2) has served more than 180 days in an active duty status and continues on active duty without a break therein; or

(3) was discharged or released from active duty after such date for a service-connected disability".

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SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS OF DRAFT BILLSection 1

This section would amend section 1652(a)(1) of title 38, United States Code, to provide that, for the purposes of eligibility for educational benefits, a veteran is defined as an individual who served on active duty for a period of 181 days or more, any part of which occurred after January 31, 1955, and before July 1, 1975, and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable, or who served during such period and was discharged or released because of a service-connected disability. The effect of the amendment to this section is to set a period of service on which eligibility for educational benefits may be based. Entrance into military service on or after July 1, 1975, would not be qualifying service for this benefit.

Section 2

Subsection (1) would amend section 1661(a) to establish June 30, 1975, as the ending date for that period of time in which an individual may commence service in the military and earn potential entitlement towards 36 months of educational assistance.

Subsection (2) represents a savings provision which would permit those persons entering military service prior to July 1, 1975, to accrue educational entitlement with the amount of such entitlement earned based upon the date of the individual's first discharge or release after June 30, 1975.

Section 3

This section would amend section 1662(a) to set June 30, 1985, as the final termination date for utilization of entitlement earned under the current GI Bill education program. The date set is 10 years following the cut-off date (July 1, 1975) and is in line with the 10-year period provided veterans of the Korean conflict. Under that program, individuals were required by law to utilize entitlement by January 31, 1965 -- ten years from the ending date of the Korean conflict (January 31, 1955).

Section 4

This section would amend section 1695(b) to set June 30, 1975, as the date beyond which individuals entering military service may not accrue entitlement to PredischARGE Education (PREP) benefits. This is consistent with the cut-off date for all other educational programs for veterans.

Section 5

This section would amend section 1818(a) to permit all veterans serving on active duty after January 31, 1955, to continue to be eligible for loan guaranty benefits. Under the provisions of section 1818(a), eligibility for loan guaranty benefits is based upon the definition of a veteran as set forth in section 1652 -- the same as educational benefits. With the termination of the educational benefit eligibility under the amended provisions of section 1 of this bill, it is necessary to amend section 1818(a) to preserve continued loan guaranty eligibility.

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