

The American Legion



OFFICE OF THE
NATIONAL COMMANDER

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March 17, 2008

Honorable Charles Hagel
United States Senate
SR-248 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Hagel:

On behalf of the 2.7 million members of The American Legion, I am writing to express support for S. 22, the Post 9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act, to establish a program of educational assistance for members of the Armed Forces who serve in the military after September 11, 2001.

It is encouraging that S. 22 would modernize veterans' education benefits by aligning benefits with the highest in-state cost of tuition per state plus provide a stipend for housing, books, supplies, and other educational costs. In addition, the rates of monthly benefits would rise each year to match the increasing costs of college. The American Legion is also pleased that this bill addresses the frequent mobilizations of the National Guard and Reserves by implementing a mechanism that will allow for benefits to be earned on a cumulative basis. Finally, this bill would allow all veterans who have earned education benefits to use them after service or after completion of a service contract.

The American Legion has a proud history of advocating for veterans benefits, most notably the passage of historical legislation, The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, also known as the "GI Bill of Rights". Harry W. Colmery, a former National Commander of the American Legion, is credited with drafting the original language that would become the GI Bill. S. 22 would basically reinstate the GI Bill to its original intent and will greatly assist veterans by helping them to pay the full costs of some colleges, not just a fraction of the expense.

We thank you, Senator Hagel, for introducing this much needed legislation. The American Legion looks forward to working with you and your colleagues on this and future legislation to assist this nation's veterans and their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marty Conatser".

MARTIN "Marty" CONATSER
National Commander

cc: Senator Webb