

WASHINGTON – Eleven national higher education groups have endorsed H.R. 5740, the bipartisan Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act, which provides returning combat veterans with educational benefits ranging from college tuition to living stipends.

The legislation, which was introduced by U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell along with Reps. Bobby Scott (D-Va.), Ginny Brown-Waite (R-Fla.), and Peter King (R-N.Y.), has 265 House co-sponsors. Its Senate companion, S. 22, which was introduced by U.S. Sens. Jim Webb (D-Va.) and Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.), has 57 co-sponsors.

“America has a proud tradition of helping veterans access higher education,” said David Warren, president of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. “We encourage the House to include H.R. 5740, the Post 9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Act, in the supplemental appropriations bill to ensure that veterans can receive full higher education benefits.”

The following organizations endorsed H.R. 5740:

- American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
- American Association of Community Colleges
- American Association of State Colleges and Universities
- American Association of University Professors
- American Association of University Women
- American Council on Education
- Association of American Universities
- The College Board
- National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
- National Association of Student Program Administrators
- United States Student Association

“I’m proud that so many organizations in the veterans’ and higher education communities are getting behind this legislation,” said Mitchell. “We have a responsibility – and an obligation – to take care of the men and women who volunteer to wear the uniform. I hope House leadership will include this important legislation in the supplemental appropriations bill.”

While there are many bills aimed at improving education benefits for veterans, none have earned the level of support of the Webb-Mitchell legislation, which has the highest number of co-sponsors of any veterans’ legislation currently before Congress. The Webb-Mitchell bill has also been endorsed by the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Iraq-Afghanistan Veterans of America.

The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act extends educational benefits to all members of the military who have served on active duty since Sept. 11, 2001, including activated reservists and National Guard.

Under the legislation,

- Service members returning from Iraq or Afghanistan would receive up to four academic years of education benefits, including stipends for housing and books.
- Veterans would have up to 15 years after they leave active duty to use their education benefits.
- Veterans would have the ability to use their benefits for program fees, tuition, books and housing.
- Veterans would be able to use the Yellow Ribbon G.I. Education Enhancement Program, in which the federal government will match, dollar for dollar, any voluntary additional contributions to veterans from institutions whose tuition is more expensive than the maximum educational assistance provided under the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill.