WASHINGTON – Support for the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act in the U.S. House of Representatives continues to grow, and there are now 191 co-sponsors for the updated GI Bill including House Appropriations Chairman David Obey.

Mitchell said the continuing momentum reflects a growing consensus among Democrats and Republicans that we need to get this done this year.

“We have a responsibility – and an obligation – to take care of the men and women who volunteer to wear the uniform,” Mitchell said.

Earlier this week, Mitchell U.S. Reps. Bobby Scott (D-Va.), Ginny Brown-Waite (R-Fla.), and Peter King (R-N.Y.), introduced H.R. 5740, the House companion to S. 22. He has asked House leadership to include the legislation as a part of the emergency war supplemental that will be considered in the next several weeks.

The updated GI Bill continues to earn support among veteran service organizations.

“Supporting the troops means helping veterans reintegrate to civilian life when they come home,” said Paul Rieckhoff, the executive director or Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. “IAVA thanks Representative Mitchell for his tremendous leadership on the new GI Bill, and his commitment to ensuring that today's troops get the educational opportunities they have earned.”

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. National Commander George Lisicki said the Montgomery GI Bill was good, but that it was peacetime legislation that was enacted more than 20 years ago.

“This new generation is now involved in the longest combat operation with an all-volunteer force in our nation’s history. They deserve a new GI Bill that is based on 21st century educational realities,” said Lisicki, a Vietnam combat veteran. “I applaud the bipartisan support of every representative who has so far endorsed H.R. 5740, and have asked my 2.3 million VFW and

Auxiliary members to urge their elected officials to support the House legislation and its companion bill in the Senate, S. 22. Now is the time for this legislation to move forward."

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

Under the legislation,

- Service members returning from Iraq or Afghanistan up to 36 months 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.