

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 1458

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 3, 2026

Received; read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

AN ACT

To amend title 38, United States Code, to modify the criteria for approval of certain independent study programs for purposes of the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Education
3 and Technical Skills Opportunity Act of 2025” or the
4 “VETS Opportunity Act of 2025”.

5 **SEC. 2. REPAYMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES**
6 **FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS POST-9/11**
7 **EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE: TIMING; MECHA-**
8 **NISM FOR INDIVIDUALS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR A**
9 **MONTHLY HOUSING STIPEND.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (f) of section 3327 of
11 title 38, United States Code, is amended—

12 (1) in paragraph (3), by striking “together”
13 and all that follows through “before” and inserting
14 “not later than 60 days after”; and

15 (2) by adding at the end the following new
16 paragraph:

17 “(4) ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR AN INDIVIDUAL NOT ELIGIBLE FOR A MONTHLY HOUSING
18 STIPEND.—In the case of an individual making an
19 election under subsection (a) who is described by
20 subparagraph (A), (C), or (E) of paragraph (1) of
21 that subsection, and who is not eligible for a month-
22 ly stipend payable under section 3313(c) of this title,
23 the educational assistance payable to the individual
24 under this chapter shall be paid—
25

1 “(A) in a lump sum calculated by multi-
2 plying—

3 “(i) the total amount of contributions
4 described in paragraph (1)(A) with regards
5 to such individual; and

6 “(ii) the sum of the number of
7 months described in subclauses (I) and (II)
8 of paragraph (1)(B)(i) with regards to
9 such individual; and

10 “(B) to the individual not later than 60
11 days after the exhaustion of the individual’s en-
12 titlement to educational assistance under this
13 chapter.”.

14 (b) TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS AND CONFORMING
15 AMENDMENT.—Such subsection is further amended—

16 (1) by striking “paragraphs (2) through (7)”
17 and inserting “paragraphs (2) through (6)”; and

18 (2) in paragraph (1), in the heading, by insert-
19 ing “FOR AN INDIVIDUAL ELIGIBLE FOR A MONTHLY
20 HOUSING STIPEND” after “ADDITIONAL ASSIST-
21 ANCE”.

22 (c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
23 this section shall take effect on August 1, 2026.

1 **SEC. 3. TREATMENT OF CERTAIN INDEPENDENT STUDY**
2 **PROGRAMS UNDER EDUCATIONAL ASSIST-**
3 **ANCE PROGRAMS OF DEPARTMENT OF VET-**
4 **ERANS AFFAIRS.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3680A(a)(4)(A)(ii)(III) of
6 such title is amended—

7 (1) by inserting “that requires regular and sub-
8 stantive interaction between students and instruc-
9 tors” after “course of study”;

10 (2) in item (aa), by striking “; or” and insert-
11 ing a semicolon;

12 (3) in item (bb), by striking “; and” and insert-
13 ing “; or”; and

14 (4) by adding at the end by following new item:

15 “(cc) an institution of high-
16 er education, as such term is de-
17 fined in section 102 of the High-
18 er Education Act of 1965 (20
19 U.S.C. 1002), that is approved to
20 participate or participating in the
21 student financial assistance pro-
22 grams authorized by title IV of
23 that Act; and”.

24 (b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendment made by sub-
25 section (a) shall apply with respect to a quarter, semester,

1 or term, as applicable, that begins on or after August 1,
2 2026.

3 **SEC. 4. ABSENCE FROM CERTAIN EDUCATION DUE TO CER-**
4 **TAIN SERVICE.**

5 (a) OPTIONS.—Section 3691A of such title is amend-
6 ed by striking paragraph (1) of subsection (a) and insert-
7 ing the following:

8 “(1) A covered member may, after receiving orders
9 to enter a period of covered service—

10 “(A) withdraw from covered education;

11 “(B) take a leave of absence from covered edu-
12 cation; or

13 “(C) subject to subsection (d), enter into an
14 agreement with the institution concerned to complete
15 a course of covered education to the satisfaction of
16 such institution concerned.”.

17 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Such subsection is
18 further amended, in paragraph (2)(A), by striking “or
19 takes a leave of absence” and inserting “, takes a leave
20 of absence, or enters into an agreement”.

21 (c) AGREEMENT.—Such section is further amend-
22 ed—

23 (1) by redesignating subsection (d) as sub-
24 section (e); and

1 (2) by inserting, after subsection (c), the fol-
 2 lowing new subsection (d):

3 “(d) AGREEMENT WITH INSTITUTION CON-
 4 CERNED.—A covered member may enter into an agree-
 5 ment under subsection (a) only if the covered member has
 6 completed at least half of a course of covered education.”.

7 (d) SECTION HEADING.—Such section is further
 8 amended by striking the heading and inserting “**Ab-**
 9 **sence from certain education due to certain**
 10 **service**”.

11 (e) TABLE OF SECTIONS.—The table of sections at
 12 the beginning of chapter 36 of such title is amended by
 13 striking the item relating to section 3691A and inserting
 14 the following new item:

“3691A. Absence from certain education due to certain service.”.

15 **SEC. 5. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS COMPLIANCE**
 16 **SURVEYS.**

17 Section 3693 of such title is amended—

18 (1) in subsection (c)—

19 (A) by striking “not more than 10 busi-
 20 ness days of notice”;

21 (B) by striking “this section.” and insert-
 22 ing “this section—”; and

23 (C) by adding at the end the following new
 24 paragraphs:

1 “(1) in the case of an educational institution or
2 training establishment with a time stamp database
3 collection feature, not fewer than 10, and not more
4 than 15, business days of notice; and

5 “(2) in the case of any other educational insti-
6 tution or training establishment, not more than 10
7 business days of notice.”; and

8 (2) by striking subsection (d) and inserting the
9 following new subsection (d):

10 “(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

11 “(1) The terms ‘educational institution’ and
12 ‘training establishment’ have the meanings given
13 such terms in section 3452 of this title.

14 “(2) The term ‘school certifying official’ means
15 an employee of an educational institution with pri-
16 mary responsibility for certifying veteran enrollment
17 at the educational institution.”.

18 **SEC. 6. NOTIFICATION OF SCHOOL CERTIFYING OFFICIALS**
19 **OF HANDBOOK UPDATES.**

20 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 14 business days
21 after updating the school certifying official handbook of
22 the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Secretary of Vet-
23 erans Affairs shall provide notice to all school certifying
24 officials of such update.

1 (b) SCHOOL CERTIFYING OFFICIAL DEFINED.—The
2 term “school certifying official” means an employee of an
3 educational institution with primary responsibility for cer-
4 tifying veteran enrollment at the educational institution.

5 **SEC. 7. EXTENSION OF CERTAIN LIMITS ON PAYMENTS OF**
6 **PENSION.**

7 Section 5503(d)(7) of title 38, United States Code,
8 is amended by striking “January 31, 2033” and inserting
9 “May 31, 2034”.

Passed the House of Representatives February 2,
2026.

Attest: KEVIN F. MCCUMBER,
Clerk.