

Administration of Barack Obama, 2012

The President's Weekly Address

April 28, 2012

On Friday, I traveled to Fort Stewart in Georgia to meet with soldiers from the 3d Infantry Division.

These men and women have fought with bravery and honor in some of the most dangerous places on the planet. Some of them didn't make it back. But those who did are now fighting a different kind of battle here at home. They're looking for new jobs, new opportunities, and new ways to serve.

For many, that means going back to school, and America has a long tradition of making sure our veterans and our men and women in uniform can afford to do that. After World War II, we helped a generation of Americans, including my grandfather, to go to school on the GI bill. Now, thanks to the 9/11 GI bill and the tuition assistance program, last year, we supported more than half a million veterans and over 300,000 servicemembers who are pursuing a higher education.

And that's progress. But it's not enough to just help our veterans and servicemembers afford school. We need to make sure they have all the tools they need to make an informed decision when it comes to picking the right program.

The sad truth is, is that there are people out there who are less interested in helping our men and women in uniform get ahead and more interested in making a buck. They bombard potential students with e-mails and pressure them into making a quick decision. Some of them steer recruits towards high-interest loans and mislead them about credit transfers and job placement programs. One of the worst examples was a college recruiter who visited a marine barracks and enrolled marines with brain injuries so severe that some of them couldn't recall what courses the recruiter had signed them up for.

That's appalling. It's disgraceful. And even though the vast majority of schools do the right thing, we need to guard against the bad actors who don't.

That's why, on Friday, I signed an Executive order making life a whole lot more secure for our servicemembers, veterans, and their families, and a whole lot tougher for anyone who tries to prey on them.

We're making sure veterans and servicemembers get a simple fact sheet called "Know Before You Owe" that lays out all the information they need about financial aid and paying for college. We're requiring schools to offer counseling to help students finish their degree even if they have to move or deploy. And we're stepping up our efforts to fight dishonest recruiters by strengthening the rules about who can come on base and make it easier to file complaints.

When our men and women in uniform succeed, our country succeeds. They have our backs; now it's our turn to have theirs. And as long as I'm President, I'm going to make sure that anyone who serves this country gets every opportunity they deserve.

Thank you, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4 p.m. on April 27 in the Grand Foyer at the White House for broadcast on April 28. In the address, the President referred to Executive

Order 13607. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 27, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on April 28.

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