



# Backgrounder

U.S. Rep. Adam Putnam (Fla.-12)

*Central Florida: Hillsborough, Osceola and Polk counties*

## **The GI Bill of Rights** ***Aiding our veterans at home***

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Educational assistance programs have been authorized for veterans of the Armed Forces since 1944. The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (P.L. 78-346), or the GI Bill of Rights, provided support, including education benefits, to veterans of World War II. Subsequently, other programs were implemented for similar purposes (e.g., the Korean GI Bill and the Vietnam Era GI Bill). These new programs were primarily, if not exclusively, funded by the federal government and were intended to support veterans returning from war. The implementation of the Post-Vietnam Era Veterans' Educational Assistance Program (VEAP) marked the first time that an educational benefit had been established for an all-volunteer force, serving during a period of peace; the first time that education benefits were viewed as a recruiting tool for the military; and the first time that program participants were required to contribute to the education benefit fund while in the military. Many of the principles of VEAP were carried over during the creation of the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB), the current military education benefit that was implemented in 1985.

The Montgomery G.I. Bill is an important benefit for veterans. It provides funding for education and training to veterans after their service. Since its inception, the Montgomery GI Bill has gone through several legislative changes in order to help millions of servicemembers

The following is a timeline of all the various programs that were implemented regarding the GI Bill:

- 1944: The original GI Bill, the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, was intended to help veterans readjust to civilian life, avoid high levels of

- unemployment, and afford returning veterans an opportunity to receive the education and training that they missed while serving in the military. This program ended on July 25, 1956;
- 1952: The Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act, the Korean GI Bill was authorized to help veterans returning from the Korean war to adjust to society. Unlike the GI Bill of Rights, this legislation did not pay for both educational expenses and provide a living allowance. Instead the single monthly benefit for the Korean GI Bill was intended to cover both;
  - 1966: The Veterans' Readjustment Benefits Act, the Post-Korea and Vietnam-Era GI Bill was originally intended for veterans of the post-Korean war era, and was not as generous as some of the earlier programs for veterans. Under this act, veterans who had been on active duty for more than 180 consecutive days were entitled to one month of educational assistance for each month of service. This was the first GI Bill that provided benefits to members of the Armed Forces while they served on active duty, as opposed to providing benefits only after the completion of active duty;
  - 1976: The Post-Vietnam Era Veterans' Educational Assistance Program (VEAP), which was established by Title IV of the Veterans' Education and Employment Assistance Act was considered an effective recruitment incentive for the Armed Forces during peacetime. Because the benefit was established for an all-volunteer force serving during peacetime, it was deemed appropriate to require participants, for the first time, to contribute to an education fund while in the military;
  - 1985: The Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB), originally called the All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance Program, was enacted as part of the Department of Defense Authorization Act. The MGIB is intended to provide educational assistance to individuals who have served in the Armed Forces and are attempting to acclimate themselves civilian life. In addition, the benefit is intended to aid in the recruitment and retention of qualified personnel for the Armed Forces.

Military education benefits has made many advancements since 1944, and will continue to do so in the future; while we can never fully repay the service and sacrifice so many brave Americans have made and continue to make on behalf of our nation, we must ensure they receive access to the kind of benefits they deserve.

*Sources: The Department of Veterans Affairs and the Congressional Research Services*