



News

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

Central Florida: Hillsborough, Osceola and Polk counties

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Keith Rupp
Communications Director
(863) 534-3530

New GI Bill expands education benefits for veterans, families

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressman Adam Putnam (R-Fla.) today announced he has introduced the House version of a bill to expand and modernize educational benefits to military veterans. A key provision of the bill will for the first time allow a veteran to transfer the educational benefits to his or her dependents. The Senate version was introduced by Senators Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), Richard Burr (R-N.C.) and John McCain (R-AZ).

“When we ask our fellow citizens to risk everything in the military service of their nation, we owe them a debt; that was the idea behind the Montgomery GI Bill,” said Putnam. “This bill is a long-overdue modernization of that very important law.”

Putnam was joined in offering the bill by U.S. Representatives Joe Wilson (R-S.C.), John Kline (R-Minn.), Thelma Drake (R-Va.), and Phil English (R-Pa.)

The concepts on which the legislation is based have been outlined by Defense Secretary Robert Gates, who stressed legislation should strengthen the all-volunteer force, create incentives for members of the military to remain in service, and reward service members for longevity.

The Enhancement of Recruitment, Retention and Readjustment through Education Act (HR 5944) provides:

- An immediate increase in education benefits for active duty personnel to \$1500 a month, and to improve retention, those benefits increase to \$2000 a month after 12 or more years of service.
- Significantly increased benefit for members of the National Guard and Reserves.

- Transferability, the ability of service members to transfer their education benefits to dependents. After 6 years, half of the benefit may be transferred and after 12 years 100% may be transferred to a spouse or dependent children.
- Student loan repayment. Allows servicemembers to use up to \$6,000 per year of Montgomery G.I. Bill education benefits to repay Federal student loans.
- Creation of a matching program to help more veterans graduate debt-free. Up to an additional \$3,000 per year could be paid by the Department of Veterans Affairs in return for the school retiring some or all of the servicemember's debt.
- Access to Montgomery G.I. Bill benefits for service academy graduates and Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps officers who continue serving.
- Builds on existing educational benefits program to ensure rapid implementation with minimal additional administrative costs.

Since 2001, Putnam has represented Florida's 12th Congressional District, which includes most of Polk County and portions of Hillsborough and Osceola counties. As chairman of the Republican Conference, he is the third ranking member of his party's leadership in the House of Representatives.