



**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 8, 2013

One Million Now Benefit from Post-9/11 GI Bill *Over \$30 Billion in Benefits for Veterans, Servicemembers, Families*

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs announced today that 1 million Veterans, Servicemembers, and family members have benefited from the Post-9/11 GI Bill since the program's inception in August 2009.

The Veterans Benefits Administration, which administers the program, has distributed over \$30 billion in the form of tuition and other education-related payments to Veterans, Servicemembers, and their families; and to the universities, colleges, and trade schools they attend.

"This is one of the most important programs helping our Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans reach their educational goals and find a good job," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "We're proud this important benefit is making such a big difference in the lives of so many Veterans and their families."

"Over the next few years, as more than a million service men and women end their military careers and return to civilian life, education will be at the forefront of that transition," said Dr. Jill Biden. "As a community college teacher, I have seen firsthand the qualities our veterans bring to the classroom – dedication, a sense of teamwork, and a commitment to their work. Helping our veterans succeed in the classroom so they can go on to find good jobs to support their families is one important way we can thank them for their service."

Today, VA announced that [Steven Ferraro](#), who is currently attending Middlesex County College, a public community college in Edison, N.J., has been identified as the 1 millionth Post-9/11 GI Bill beneficiary. Ferraro served in the Army from 2003-2013 and deployed to Iraq in 2008 as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He is the father of three and is majoring in communications.

“I thought it was a great privilege to be the one millionth recipient of the GI Bill,” said Ferraro. “Coming back to college after leaving the military, it was a great stepping stone for me and my family.”

“We are pleased that the Post-9/11 generation of Veterans is taking advantage of this significant benefit program,” said Under Secretary for Benefits Allison A. Hickey. “The scope of the program we’ve administered thus far would fund the undergraduate student bodies of Virginia Tech, Ohio State University, West Virginia University, and University of Florida combined – for eight years.”

The Post-9/11 GI Bill is a comprehensive education benefit created by Congress in 2008. In general, Veterans and Servicemembers who have served on active duty for 90 or more days since Sept. 10, 2001 are eligible. On average, VA processes the initial claims for Post-9/11 GI Bill educational benefits in 23 days.

VA’s new automated processing system, called the Long-Term Solution, uses more than 1,600 business rules to support end-to-end automation of Post-9/11 GI Bill claims, ensuring accurate payments without the need for manual handling, also resulting in quicker processing of education claims.

Servicemembers have the opportunity to transfer the benefit to immediate family members. Legally, GI Bill benefits are tiered based on the number of days served on active duty, giving activated National Guard and Reserve members the same benefits as all other active duty members. These benefits include:

- Up to the full amount of tuition and fees for a state-operated college or university. The Yellow Ribbon Program may provide additional assistance for students attending private institutions or who are charged out-of-state tuition and fees;
- Monthly housing allowance, which is based upon the location of the school; and
- Annual books and supplies stipend of up to \$1,000.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill also provides work-study programs, tutorial assistance and license and certification test reimbursement.

Enacted in 1944, the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act, known as the “GI Bill of Rights,” recognized that military service was an inherently selfless act which demanded a certain amount of compensation. As a result of the bill, nearly half of the 16 million Veterans of World War II went to school and received an education – helping to rejuvenate

the post-war economy and transform not only the lives of Veterans, but the fabric of the nation.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill builds on the same great legacy of the original GI Bill, giving Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans and their families a chance to improve their lives and invest in their future through higher education. For more information on VA education benefits go to <http://www.gibill.va.gov/>

#