



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
VETERANS' AFFAIRS
Republicans | Ranking Member Phil Roe, M.D.

**H.R. 2045: Veterans' Education, Transition, and Opportunity Prioritization Plan
(VET OPP) Act of 2019**

Background:

Currently, the Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA) is responsible for all VA benefits provided to veterans outside of healthcare and cemetery services. While there are many different benefits that VBA provides, the bulk of the staffing and resources has been directed towards the administration of disability compensation and pension claims. This primary focus on compensation and pension claims has resulted in a lack of attention on the administration of other VBA benefits, such as the Forever GI Bill, Vocational Rehabilitation, Home Loan benefits, and VA's portion of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) – benefits that promote self-sufficiency.

The VET OPP Act would address this issue by realigning the transition, education, and employment programs at VA under one roof. This would streamline these veteran services and place a greater priority on opportunity-based programs within VA. The legislation would create a new administration, the Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration, which would be accountable to a presidentially appointed undersecretary and would be created using existing resources at VA to avoid the growth of government and additional bureaucracy.

The Message:

- The new undersecretary would oversee all education, vocational rehabilitation, employment, transition, and home loan benefits as well as verification of small business under the Vets First program.
- This proposal has been supported by many VSOs in past years, as they agree that these other benefit programs that help veterans transition back into a stable civilian life are not getting enough attention within VBA or VA at large.
- A recent IG report on GI Bill implementation delays outlined that the lack of a singular accountable person resulted in the implementation being put on the backburner within VA.
- The legislation would finally make one person accountable for these issue areas, which would help avoid the type of problems that occurred with the implementation of the Forever GI Bill last fall.