

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON **VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

CHAIRMAN MIKE BOST

H.R. 502: To amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs repays members of the Armed Forces for certain contributions made by such members towards Post-9/11 Educational Assistance, and for other purposes

Background:

Under current law, servicemembers who choose to participate in the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) must contribute at least \$1,200 dollars from their basic pay in their first year in service to become eligible for education benefits. However, for the Post-9/11 GI Bill, contributions are not required for eligibility. Servicemembers and veterans who are eligible for both the MGIB and the Post-9/11 GI Bill, and who choose to receive benefits under the Post-9/11 GI Bill at a later date, may receive a refund for their MGIB contributions. This refund is made by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) after the veteran uses all of their Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits, and it **must** be paid through their final monthly housing payment. Unfortunately, under current law, active-duty servicemembers who use their final education eligibility while on active-duty do not qualify to have the \$1,200 dollars they have already paid reimbursed using this method. This is due to active-duty servicemembers receiving their housing allowance from the Department of Defense, not VA.

H.R. 502 would eliminate the requirement that servicemembers must be reimbursed through their final monthly housing payment. This would allow about 25,000 active-duty servicemembers who were previously ineligible to have their \$1,200 reimbursed, eligible for repayment. Under the bill, VA would make the reimbursement before the exhaustion of the individual's entitlement to educational assistance.

The Message:

- No servicemember who elects to use the Post-9/11 GI Bill, despite paying into the Montgomery GI Bill, should miss out on their refund simply because they are on active duty while they go to school.
- H.R. 502 is a commonsense measure to ensure that every servicemember and veteran is able to receive the repayment they are due.
- With rising inflation costs and many students struggling to make ends meet, H.R. 502 will help ease the financial burden that is put on college students.