

# HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

CHAIRMAN MIKE BOST

## VETS Opportunity Act of 2025 – Rep. Ciscomani

### Background:

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has not updated its independent study programs to meet the evolving needs of veterans in the workforce and education. Current law does not require approval for independent study programs under the GI Bill, despite the increasing demand for flexible educational options. To address this, the [\*VETS Opportunity Act of 2025\*](#), would expand the GI Bill to enhance opportunities for veterans, helping them succeed academically and increasing veteran participation in the workforce.

Additionally, National Guardsmen and Reservists currently cannot receive grades if called to active duty during the semester, while active-duty servicemembers can. This bill aims to create parity among them and increase the notice period for compliance surveys to prevent fraud regarding class records. This bill would also fix another inequity issue regarding active duty and reservists. Currently, active-duty service members 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 loophole is due to active-duty servicemembers receiving their housing allowance from the Department of Defense, not VA.

The *VETS Opportunity Act of 2025* would allow VA to approve GI Bill enrollment in accredited independent study programs that offer certificates. It would also enable reimbursement of the \$1,200 payment to active-duty service members before they exhaust their educational benefits. Furthermore, it would allow student veterans in the National Guard or Reserves to achieve grades if activated, ensuring they are treated equally to non-veterans in accessing educational programs.

### The Message:

- The *VETS Opportunity Act* would create additional options for Guard and Reserve students to complete their coursework without bureaucratic delays. That way, student veterans avoid retaking a course if they have completed more than half of it.
- National Guardsman and Reservists should not be penalized for receiving active-duty orders while pursuing an education.
- The *VETS Opportunity Act* would give veterans more options to choose how they would like to use their GI Bill benefits.
- The *VETS Opportunity Act* would allow veterans to use their education benefits on non-traditional programs to secure high-earning jobs in in-demand fields.