

March 26, 2026

The Honorable Doug Collins
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Secretary Collins,

The undersigned organizations are writing to urge the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to reinstate the monthly GI Bill stakeholder meeting. These meetings have long served as a critical forum for communication between VA and the organizations that support veterans, service members, their families, caregivers, and survivors in accessing their earned education benefits.

While we appreciate the meeting that occurred on February 19, 2026, it was made clear during that discussion that it was intended to be a one-time discussion and that future engagement would occur only "as needed." This approach falls short of the level of transparency and collaboration that has historically benefited both the Department and the stakeholders who work daily with GI Bill beneficiaries, and with veterans using other education benefits provided by the VA. For nearly a decade prior to November 2024, these meetings were held monthly and served as a reliable mechanism for transparency and collaboration. Replacing that established forum with ad hoc engagement represents a significant step backward in communication with stakeholders.

These monthly meetings played an important role in sharing program updates, discussing implementation challenges, and allowing external partners to raise concerns directly with VA officials. This regular engagement improved transparency, strengthened collaboration, and helped identify operational issues before they affected large numbers of beneficiaries.

For example, consider the significant delays in processing Chapter 35 Dependents' Educational Assistance payments last fall. Many students and families experienced harmful financial strain while waiting for benefits they rely on to cover housing, tuition, and everyday living expenses. Regular stakeholder meetings could have provided an opportunity to surface processing challenges earlier, allow schools and advocacy organizations to relay real-time feedback from affected students, and facilitate collaboration to mitigate the impact on beneficiaries.

Reinstating the monthly GI Bill stakeholder meeting would restore an essential line of communication between the Department and the partners who work every day with GI Bill beneficiaries. Regular engagement is necessary to ensure transparency, address operational concerns promptly, and maintain confidence in the administration of veterans' education benefits.

We strongly encourage the Department to restore these monthly meetings and reaffirm its commitment to consistent, meaningful engagement with the veteran and higher education communities.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Respectfully,

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)

American Council on Education (ACE)

American Legion

AMVETS

Association of Jesuit Colleges & Universities (AJCU)

Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU)

Commissioned Officers Association of the US Public Health Service (COA)

Common Defense

Elizabeth Dole Foundation

Fleet Reserve Association (FRA)

Gold Star Spouses of America

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA)

Jewish War Veterans of the USA

Marine Corps League

Military Chaplains Association

Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)

Military Order of the Purple Heart

National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO)

National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU)

National Association of State Approving Agencies (NASAA)

National Association of Veteran Program Administrators (NAVPA)

National Military Family Association

No Greater Sacrifice

Non-Commissioned Officers Association (NCOA)

Reserve Organization of America (ROA)

Service to School

Service Woman's Action Network (SWAN)

Today's Students Coalition

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)

United States Army Warrant Officers Association (USAWOA)

Veterans Education Success (VES)

Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA)