



Ventura County Community College District

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DR. JAMILLAH MOORE
CHANCELLOR

February 13, 2013

Mr. George J. Opfer
Inspector General
Office of Inspector General (50)
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Re: Resolution in Support of Veterans Educational Assistance Improvement Act

Dear Inspector General Opfer,

On behalf of Ventura County Community College District, thank you for your ongoing work with Veterans. As our Board of Trustees is committed to keeping the door open for Veteran students seeking educational opportunities in California, the Board unanimously passed the attached resolution regarding the Veterans Educational Assistance Improvement Act.

One area of concern for our Veteran students is the "break pay" provision, which was modified when the Veterans Educational Assistance Improvement Act was reauthorized. Under the old GI Bill, Veteran students received their housing allowance during non-school breaks such as the winter holiday break and spring break, so long as the break was less than 45 days. This was commonly called "break pay." Under SB-3447, break or interval pay is no longer payable under any VA educational benefit program unless by an Executive Order of the President or due to an emergency situation such as a national disaster or strike.

This has a devastating impact on Veteran students when colleges cancel sessions as a result of budgetary problems. Veteran students are inadvertently impacted due to the unavailability of classes. We do not believe this issue is unique to California. As we continue to struggle with a challenging economy, more Veteran students will suffer negative consequences. Ventura County Community College District is a public community college district serving over 32,000 students at its three colleges – Moorpark College, Oxnard College, and Ventura College.

Thank you for taking the time to review this matter and address our concern. I appreciate any feedback, direction, or assistance you can provide on this issue.

Sincerely,


Jamillah Moore, Ed.D.
Chancellor

c: Board of Trustees

VENTURA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT



Resolution In Support Of Veterans Educational Assistance Improvement Act

WHEREAS, the California Community Colleges is the largest system of higher education in the nation, composed of 72 districts and 112 colleges serving 2.6 million students each year; and

WHEREAS, more than half a million Veterans, their dependents, and active-duty military personnel are taking college courses; and

WHEREAS, Veteran students are able to attend college with The Post 9/11 Veterans Assistance Improvement Act, also known as the G.I. Bill. The bill amended Title 38, United States Code, to improve educational assistance for Veterans who served in the Armed Forces after September 11, 2001; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Assistance Improvement Act provides 36 months of tuition equal to the cost of most public universities, plus a housing allowance and book stipend; and

WHEREAS, the California Community Colleges have sustained more than \$800 million in state budget cuts over the last three fiscal years. The total cut to California Community Colleges in fiscal year 2011-12 was \$315 million; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Government made changes to the Veterans Assistance Improvement Act by implementing "break pay," placing Veteran students at risk of homelessness and foreclosing on their educational opportunities; and

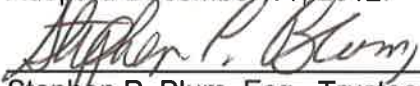
WHEREAS, "break pay" means that when classes are not in session, no money will be paid to Veteran students for housing. A "break" can last two weeks between terms or during summer months; and

WHEREAS, budget cuts have caused California Community Colleges to significantly reduce course offerings, including the elimination of summer and winter terms; and

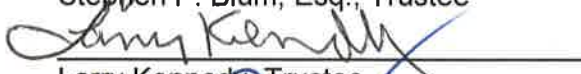
WHEREAS, without enrollment in classes, benefits are not paid and work study is unavailable. This means that Veterans who depend on the GI Bill for housing, rent, and essentials will find themselves without any source of income for the entire time school is not in session.

NOW, THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of Ventura County Community College District hereby supports the Veterans Educational Assistance Improvement Act and the elimination of "break pay," a loss of income, for Veterans.

Adopted December 11, 2012:



Stephen P. Blum, Esq., Trustee



Larry Kennedy, Trustee



Bernardo M. Pérez, Trustee



Arturo D. Hernández, Trustee



Dianne B. McKay, Trustee



Jamillah Moore, Ed.D., Chancellor