

On April 9th, I joined 170 of my colleagues in the House of Representatives to introduce bipartisan legislation improving educational benefits for veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Our current programs have failed to keep up with the rising cost of higher education. H.R. 5740, the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act, would create a new education benefit modeled after the World War II "G.I. Bill." It would guarantee that veterans who have served on active duty since September 11, 2001 - including members of the National Guard and Reserves - receive assistance covering the full cost of in-state tuition at any public university in their state, along with a monthly housing stipend. H.R. 5740 also authorizes the U.S. government to provide matching funds to private colleges that voluntarily contribute additional assistance for veterans. Under this provision, colleges and universities will have an opportunity to show that they support our troops.

It has been estimated that the original G.I. Bill generated seven dollars of economic growth for every dollar spent on veterans' education. But more importantly, we have an obligation to those who have served our nation with honor and sacrificed for our freedom. Educational assistance is the best way to ensure that veterans make a successful transition to civilian life, and it may also help to reduce the incidence of post traumatic stress disorder. Passing a new, comprehensive G.I. bill is one way America can convey its gratitude to the men and women who have put their lives on the line in the war against radical jihadists.