

**ADVICE FROM VETERANS  
ON MILITARY SERVICE AND RECRUITING PRACTICES:  
A RESOURCE GUIDE  
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE CONSIDERING ENLISTMENT  
SECOND EDITION**

✧ ✧ ✧ **THE SO-CALLED "NEW" G. I. BILL** ✧ ✧ ✧

The original Bill—S. 22, 110th Congress, 1st Session—was introduced on January 4, 2004, as "A BILL To amend title 38, United States Code ..." and it was called the *"Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2007."*

As this Resource Guide went to press it was announced that another war funding bill was signed into law on June 30, 2008. Included in the law was legislation modifying the Montgomery G. I. Bill. It is unclear, at this time, what the full ramifications of this legislation will mean to US military men and women once the law has been implemented. Even at this early date, some in the educational community have reservations about how helpful the "new" bill will be.

Jon Oberg, a former higher education executive and state and U.S. Department of Education official and Navy veteran, expressed the following concerns on an August 2008 BLOG posted on the New America Foundation website: "For the upcoming academic year, Congress has given current veterans' benefits a healthy boost, as a transition to implementing the new GI Bill. But this will not necessarily translate into less debt." As Oberg notes: "[F]or every institution that bravely tries to break away from the loan-obsessed, merit-dominated hegemony of the current system, others have decided that they cannot ... I fear that many institutions will be looking at veterans as an easy mark, carrying a lot of federal cash to convert to their own priorities." The problems with the financial system currently in place is not addressed by the "new" bill and until this system is overhauled, Oberg argues veterans can expect to have enormous difficulties navigating the system and as a result end up with plenty of debt.

Most of the new requirements in the amended bill appear to require continued military service in either an active or reserve status. Additionally, Oberg maintains that, even when the new GI Bill fully kicks in, the promised benefits will only be available to those veterans who have earned full coverage and attend full time. If a veteran serves less than three years in the military he or she will see their benefits greatly reduced.

Because this legislation is so new, recruiters, at this time, are unlikely to understand the full ramifications of the amended G. I. Bill. A recruiter will undoubtedly reiterate the positive selling points touted in the press while downplaying or ignoring the negative aspects of the legislation and any hoops a service member must jump through in order to take full advantage of the G. I. Bill.

Since the new Bill amends the existing G. I. Bill our principal advice remains unchanged: Anyone seriously considering enlisting in the military—particularly if the G. I. Bill is the incentive for enlisting—must make a concerted effort to ensure that she or he fully understands the eligibility and entitlement requirements—pro and con—of the program before they enlist. It is our considered opinion that the advice given in this Resource Guide is still the best course of action for a person to follow.