

VFW, SVA Fill GI Bill Void During Government Shutdown

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WASHINGTON – As a result of the ongoing shutdown, the Department of Veterans Affairs GI Bill hotline, 1-888-GIBILL-1, remains offline, meaning veterans have very few places to turn for reliable information on accessing their earned GI Bill benefits. To counter the lack of customer service, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) and Student Veterans of America (SVA) are once again informing veterans that the “1 Student Veteran” program is fully open for the business. Those with questions regarding GI Bill, or other benefits should email 1studentveteran@vfw.org, for timely assistance.

“This irresponsible government shutdown has already affected countless student-veterans, which is why we have the obligation to ensure that ‘1 Student Veteran’ helps fill the information void,” said VFW Commander-in-Chief Bill Thien. “The shutdown has not only cut off the direct line to VA, but it has also left veterans wondering whether or not their benefits will be delivered on time. This is why the VFW and SVA stand ready to answer those difficult questions in a timely manner.”

“This shutdown has further complicated an already difficult process student veterans must navigate when seeking to use their earned education benefits,” said SVA executive director Wayne Robinson. “While veterans no longer have access to many VA resources, the ‘1 Student Veteran’ program remains open to provide direct assistance and answers to veterans in a timely manner. Together with the VFW, SVA remains committed to working with student veterans and institutions nationwide to address their concerns and find a suitable solution to this problem.”

Since its introduction in June, the team behind “1 Student Veteran” has answered hundreds of inquiries on dozens of issues like benefits inaccuracies, available support services, and even to clarify the VA benefits student-veterans are eligible to receive. Veterans who send a message to 1studentveteran@vfw.org and receive a reply within 24 hours or the next business day from a VFW staff member who specializes in student-veteran issues.

“1 Student Veteran” was the product of a recent memorandum of understanding between VFW and SVA to offer mutual aid and assistance to the student-veteran community.

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VA Secretary Eric Shinseki confirmed this week that living stipends and other benefit payments for nearly one million currently-enrolled student-veterans could be cut off if Congress fails to resolve the government shutdown by Nov. 1. With the deadline looming, the VFW and SVA stand ready to assist in any way possible to ensure that student-veterans can continue in their programs of study.

In a recent press statement, Thien called the continued shutdown “totally unacceptable and disgraceful.” Veterans interested in contacting their members of Congress, calling for an end to the shutdown can take action through the VFW by clicking here:

<http://capwiz.com/vfw/issues/alert/?alertid=62963871>

About Student Veterans of America

SVA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit coalition of over 850 student veteran organizations on college campuses globally. SVA's mission is to provide military veterans with the resources, support, and advocacy needed to succeed in higher education and following graduation. For more information, visit us at www.studentveterans.org or visit our YouTube channel.