

Statement of Senator Jim Webb on the White House's Embrace of his 21st Century GI Bill



"For the past 17 months, I and my staff have been working every day to provide first-class educational benefits to those who have served since 9/11. I am delighted that after having opposed this legislation, the President has now pledged that he will not veto it when it comes before him as part of this year's supplemental appropriations package.

"The bill being sent to the President contains every provision in S. 22, which has received meticulous scrutiny and the full support of every major veterans' organization. It will pay for a veteran's tuition, books, and a monthly stipend, along the lines of the benefits given to those who returned from World War II. As such, it fulfills the pledge I made on my first day of office to provide today's veterans with the opportunity to move forward into an absolutely first-class future.

"I would like to again express my appreciation to the veterans' service organizations, many of whom communicated their support of this bill directly to a skeptical White House, and to the 58 Senate and 302 House cosponsors of this landmark legislation. This bipartisan coalition consistently rejected the allegations of this Administration, and of Senators McCain, Burr and Graham, among others, who claimed that the bill was too generous to our veterans, too difficult to administer and would hurt retention.

"It has now been nearly seven years since 9/11 -- seven years since those who have been serving in our military began earning the right for a proper wartime GI Bill. I am looking forward to the President living up to his word, and signing this legislation at his earliest opportunity."