

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3211

March 18, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
House Minority Leader
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

In light of the sudden and forced education changes the coronavirus pandemic is causing our student veterans, we write to urge you to swiftly consider a fix to Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) for our veteran students who must switch from on-site to online classes, and ensure that no student veteran's housing is at risk during this emergency.

Under the Post-9/11 GI Bill, veterans receive housing benefits to provide fair housing for students who attend college classes or on-the-job training programs. The benefit is based on the location of the college campus where the veteran student takes the majority of their classes, and the method of classwork. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) rate for a full-time student utilizing exclusively online training is \$894.50—thousands of dollars less than the on-site class rate for many veterans. Given the large number of universities converting to online-only education out of caution, veterans will be locked into an unplanned lower BAH rate, and one they're likely to be unprepared for.

We will see a growing population of student veterans forced to make untenable financial and housing decisions, because while their BAH rate will change, they will still need to pay their rent at the end of the month. This unexpected cut to BAH will severely impact their lives, and must be delayed.

Several Members of Congress in the House and Senate Committees on Veterans Affairs have introduced bills requiring VA to delay implementation of these lower rates, including Chairman Mark Takano through H.R. 6212, and Chairman Jerry Moran through the Senate-passed S. 3503. We urge you to include language to address this in the upcoming economic stimulus package being prepared for consideration, or in any viable legislative vehicle as soon as possible. Our veteran students simply cannot afford to wait.

Sincerely,

Max Rose
Member of Congress

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress

Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress

Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Member of Congress

Joe Cunningham
Member of Congress

Chris Pappas
Member of Congress

Susie Lee
Member of Congress