

Oregon House Committee on Education
Hearing on Veterans Private Education Protection Act: HB 2976
March 20th, 2019
Jay Hernandez

Hello,

My name is Jay Hernandez and I became a U.S Marine because I was one of the youth that wanted more for their life. Being born to an illiterate father and a legally blind mother left me with little to no mentors. Born into poverty and a disability stricken family, I knew that I needed to make the right steps to one day live a healthy, first-world, fruitful life.

Fast forward to approximately a year before I left the service, I found myself heckled by University of Phoenix. The most memorable moment was when I was in the middle of a training operation on FT. Bragg, North Carolina and they called just as I was going to sleep.

Approximately two years later, I found myself beaten and hardly capable of doing construction for long periods. I decided that I would put in the painful work and go to school in tangent. At one point, I was spreading rebar in preparation to form foundations when a service-connected injury informed me that I could not perform much longer. A few days later, I quit.

What I did not know was how difficult it was for a Veteran to obtain quality employment. I job hopped for a year or so and found myself living paycheck to paycheck with a \$900+ monthly stipend from going to school online. I was sinking fast and needed to find my path. That is when I registered to attend Clackamas Community College. While registering for Clackamas, I came to find that the 22+ credits that I earned were not accredited.

With a little bit of luck, and three years of hard work, I Graduated from Marylhurst University with a Bachelor of Liberal Arts that I concentrated on Veteran Transitions. With those studies I came to find that Vets are 14% more likely to become homeless due to financial illiteracy as well as, it takes approximately 2.5 years for Service Members to find income equal to that of their service contract.

Fortunately, I have always been determined to create a fruitful life. I lost a year of education benefits that I could be going towards earning a Masters. Others have lost most of their educational benefits, been put in to debt, and lost masters degrees.

Finally, almost 6 years after my discharge, I am seeing success. I am now an Employment Developer for Easterseals Oregon and fight to find those little known pathways for Veteran success. We have a choice to take a step in the right direction. Please help us in correcting the integrity of these for-profit institutions.

Thank you

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