



U.S. House of Representatives  
**Joe Cunningham**  
1st District, South Carolina

July 22, 2019

The Honorable Paul R. Lawrence, Ph.D.  
Undersecretary for Benefits  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Undersecretary Lawrence:

As a Member of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, I write to respectfully request additional information with regard to the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) policy with respect to enforcement of 38 USC 3690, which authorizes the VA to take action against educational institutions found to be overcharging educational assistance beneficiaries.

As you know, the legislative intent of §3690 is to prevent colleges and universities from creating tuition schemes designed to maximize charges to VA beneficiaries while offering lower, market-based rates to nonveterans, who are more likely to be conscious of the cost of tuition. To be an effective steward of taxpayer dollars, the federal government must ensure that veterans are being charged for tuition at a rate equal to or less than the rate offered to similarly-circumstanced nonveterans.

Accordingly, I request a briefing from the VA that addresses the following items:

- Over the past five years, how many educational institutions has the VA found to have overcharged VA beneficiaries pursuant to subsection (a) of §3690?
- Over the past five years, in how many instances has the VA disapproved an educational institution pursuant to subsection (a) of §3690?
- What is the VA's policy in cases in which an educational institution may have willfully attempted to conceal that it overcharges veterans pursuant to subsection (a) of §3690?

- Does the VA interpret §3690(a)(1) to be consistent with tuition-discount programs offered exclusively to preferred categories of students, of which veterans are likely to be excluded?

I look forward to your response and thank you for everything you do to ensure our veterans have access to the benefits they deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joe Cunningham" with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Joe Cunningham  
Member of Congress