



# VETERANS EDUCATION SUCCESS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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## VETERANS EDUCATION SUCCESS RESPONDS TO VA'S DECISION TO SUSPEND CALIFORNIA'S ROLE AS A STATE APPROVING AGENCY FOR GI BILL

Washington, DC -- Today's announcement by the U.S. Department of Veterans of Affairs that it is suspending the California State Approving Agency (SAA) is a cause for concern as well as an opportunity for VA to show leadership.

It is a cause for concern because California was often the only SAA standing up for veterans who were defrauded by predatory schools, including ITT Technical Institute and Corinthian, which California took early action to cut off.

But today's news also provides an opportunity for VA to lead the way. After a number of years of tension between VA and the states over GI Bill oversight, VA's decision today provides VA the opportunity to take the lead in standing up for those "who have borne the battle" especially in protecting student veterans and their hard-earned GI Bill. For example, VA and California have had more than a year of tension over which has the authority to resolve the question of GI Bill approval for Ashford, a school under law enforcement action for defrauding veterans, that continues to receive GI Bill funds, despite being headquartered in California, which refused to grant it approval - as we made clear in our groundbreaking report, [Ashford's Fight to Maintain GI Bill Access Raises Questions about the Enforcement and the Adequacy of Statutory Requirements](#).

With two cops on the beat, there was tension between California and the VA as to which had authority to handle predatory colleges, such as the question of Ashford's lack of approval. Now, with only one cop on the beat, we look forward to VA's taking action. Therefore, today represents an opportunity for VA to pave the way for other SAAs in ensuring GI Bill funds are not wasted at subpar colleges that defraud veterans. We stand ready to work with VA to stand up for student veterans, and urge VA to take immediate action to protect student veterans from Ashford, whose predatory behavior against veterans is well-documented in the [2017 California Attorney General lawsuit](#).

Indeed, VA is facing an imperative from its Inspector General's [recommendations](#) to stop the waste of more than \$2.3B over 5 years in GI Bill funding to schools that should not be approved for the GI Bill, especially those that engage in deceptive advertising and marketing, which VA is obligated to cut off under 38 USC 3696.

We urge VA to ensure it is adequately staffed to serve as the CA SAA, overseeing program approval for more than 1,200 schools in California, and to implement the IG's recommendations to ensure veterans' hard-earned GI Bill is not wasted at colleges that defraud veterans.

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