VETERANS
EDUCATION SUCCESS

Annual Report

2019 IN REVIEW

ABOUT US

A VOICE FOR MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENTS

Veterans Education Success works on a bipartisan basis to advance higher education success for veterans, service members, and military families, and to protect the integrity and promise of the GI Bill and other federal education programs. We are bipartisan policy experts, academic researchers, lawyers, and advocates. We are veterans and non-veterans dedicated to bridging the military-civilian divide to ensure career and education success for military families.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

A TRUSTED SOURCE FOR EXPERTISE & INSIGHT

State Policy Manager Ramond Curtis testified before the legislatures in New York, Oregon, and Maryland about protecting veterans from predatory colleges.

Vice President Tanya Ang testified to the House Veterans' Affairs Committee about improving disabled veterans' access to college.

Senior Advisor Bob Norton testified to the House Veterans Affairs Committee about improving oversight of colleges receiving the GI Bill.

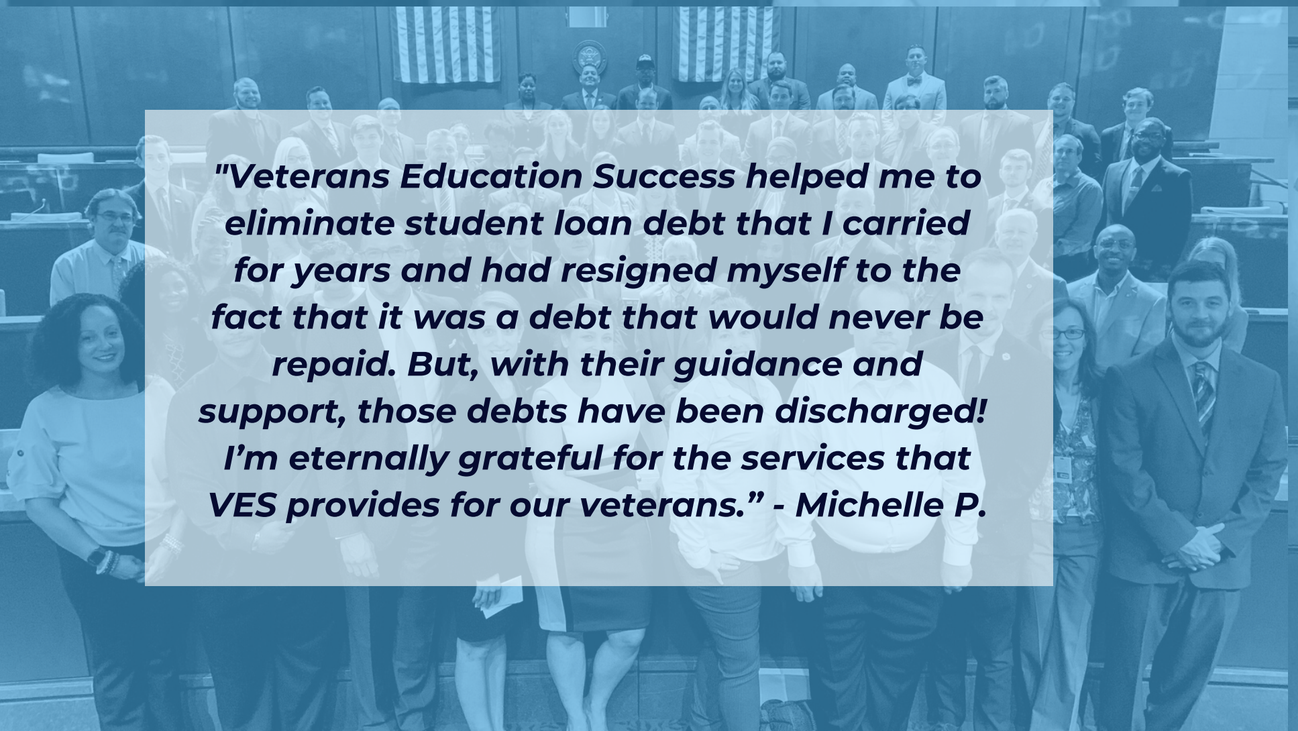
Director of Military and Consumer Policy Mike Saunders testified before Congress on the need to reform VA's debt collection process for GI Bill Students.

ELEVATING VETERAN VOICES

LEADING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT WITH CONGRESS

Capitol Hill Day

We flew **30 veterans who had been defrauded out of their GI Bill benefits** to Washington, D.C. where we formed 20 teams who told their stories to more than 80 Members of Congress.



"Veterans Education Success helped me to eliminate student loan debt that I carried for years and had resigned myself to the fact that it was a debt that would never be repaid. But, with their guidance and support, those debts have been discharged! I'm eternally grateful for the services that VES provides for our veterans." - Michelle P.

District Meetings

We coordinated **district meetings in California, Oregon, Maryland, and New York** where military-connected students shared their stories and policy priorities with elected officials.

ELEVATING VETERAN VOICES

SHARING THE STORIES OF THOSE WE SERVE

We ensured our students' voices were covered by dozens of media outlets including **HBO and NBC News**. In 2019 we **featured more than 50 military-connected students telling their stories** on social media and YouTube. We also co-created three consumer education videos alerting veterans to scam websites, how to best search for a college, the pitfalls of for-profit schools and more.

Veterans Education Success 2019

IN THE NEWS

DRIVING THE CONVERSATION & NARRATIVE

Quoted in Media

Our team was **quoted in more than 100 major news outlets** including the Washington Post, NBC News, and the Chicago Tribune.

Op-eds

We placed nearly a dozen op-eds in national news publications including **Politico, The Hill, Stars & Stripes, and The New York Times.**

Blogs & Consumer Advice

We published nearly 10 blogs on our website, were featured in two podcasts, and placed **three consumer education articles in military and veteran publications like Military Times**.

Press Conferences

We organized **three press conferences** with military and veteran organizations raising awareness on issues like predatory recruiting by schools, student loan interest rates, and reauthorizing the Higher Education Act.

Learn more at vetsedsuccess.org/news/in-the-news

BRIEFINGS & POLICY LETTERS

ENGAGING ALLIES AND DEMANDING ACTION

We collaborate with veteran and military allies to maximize our collective advocacy impact, offering policy recommendations to federal and state policymakers. In 2019, **we mobilized more than 40 different military and veteran service organizations to sign on to policy letters on behalf of military-connected students and hosted nearly 20 briefings and panel discussions** including three in Congress.

Learn more at vetsedsuccess.org/what-we-do/policy-advocacy

RESEARCH

CONTENT THAT MAKES AN IMPACT

Issue Brief: *Veteran Student Loan Debt 7 Years After Implementation of the Post9/11 GI Bill*

Issue Brief: *Proposed Education Department Regulatory Changes Should Be Reevaluated Based on GI Bill Oversight Lessons*

Report: *Should Colleges Spend the GI Bill on Veterans' Education or Late Night TV Ads?*

Issue Brief: *VA Still Not Enforcing 1974 Ban on Schools that Engage in Deceptive Advertising and Recruiting*

Issue Brief: *Weak Return on Investment at Trade Schools that Enroll GI Bill Beneficiaries*

Report: *VA and SAA Approval and Disapproval Authority Should Be Clarified*

Report: *VA and States Should Act on Early Warning Signs When Risks to GI Bill Beneficiaries and Taxpayers Emerge at Participating Schools*

Report: *Overemphasis on Payment Accuracy Impedes More Effective SAA Oversight of Schools Participating in the GI Bill*

Issue Brief: *The 85-15 Rule and Related Safeguards*

Issue Brief: *Congress Should Consider Authorizing VA to Require Letters of Credit from Schools in order to Mitigate Risks to Veterans and Taxpayers*

Learn more at vetsedsuccess.org/resources/research-and-reports

LEGAL WORK

HELPING VETERANS KNOW THEIR RIGHTS

FTC Action

We supplied whistleblowers, victims, and evidence **that led to the FTC's $191M settlement with the University of Phoenix** for defrauding students.

Veterans' Casework

We **helped more than 300 military-connected students** learn their GI Bill rights, apply for a student loan discharge, and file complaints about their school to VA and law enforcement agencies.

Amicus Briefs

We filed **two amicus briefs holding student loan servicers accountable for deceiving service members** and veterans about Public Service Loan Forgiveness.

Scam Websites

We **alerted FTC to fake military websites that pretended to be a place where Americans could join the Armed Forces** but instead sold their personal information to bad actor colleges. The FTC shut these websites down.

"I tried for years to find help when a for-profit college misrepresented itself to me. Lucky enough, someone I knew pointed me to Veterans Education Success. They were able to help me with the VA system and put me in contact with free lawyers who could help. Within a year I was able to reach an agreement with the college in question and now I have a little less to worry about."

- Army veteran

Learn more at learn more at vetsedsuccess.org/what-we-do/legal-advocacy

KEY POLICY ISSUES

HOLDING GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABLE

Disabled Veterans

President Trump ordered the Education Department and VA to coordinate on **automatically discharging student loans for severely disabled veterans** after we broke the news that more than 25,000 veterans were in default while eligible to have their loans discharged.

Protect VETS Act

We worked with our allies to secure the **first-ever bi-partisan bill in the U.S. Senate to close the 90-10 loophole** and protect veterans from predatory recruitment practices. This is our best opportunity to close the loophole since 1992.

Protect the GI Bill Act

Representing over a decade of advocacy, we worked with Hill staff to introduce a bill that **would create common-sense oversight of schools and give military-connected students the same rights as non-veterans** when their schools close, when they face an overpayment, and when a school loses its eligibility to operate.

Military Lending Act

We worked with allies to raise awareness about **the rollback of service members' rights and protections** from predatory lenders by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. We established a coalition of nearly 30 allies to advocate for expanding MLA to veterans, survivors, un-activated Reservists and all Americans.

Learn more at learn more at vetsedsuccess.org/what-we-do/policy-advocacy

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