

Hugo Lentze, Travis Manion Foundation

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Good morning, and thank you for the chance to be here today. My name is Hugo Lentze, and I have the honor of serving as the Chief Strategic Partnerships Officer at the Travis Manion Foundation. For those who may not be as familiar with our work, we strive to unite and strengthen communities by training, developing, and highlighting the role models within them.

Inspired by—and dedicated to—Marine Corps 1stLt Travis Manion, he made the ultimate sacrifice for the safety of his military patrol in Iraq's Al Anbar Province in 2007. Due to his actions that day, all members of his patrol survived. Today, we carry on his legacy of selfless service and leadership, and that of all those who have served, or continue to serve, our nation.

Over the years, this Nation has viewed service members and veterans in many ways. We are fortunate to have reached a point where they are respected and valued members of our society. When it comes to the closing the 90-10 loophole, we request for this Department to honor the service and sacrifices of veterans by keep the law strong. It took many organizations, a bipartisan Congress, and nearly a decade of advocacy to finally close this loophole.

Last week, our team hosted General Joe Dunford, the recent Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He had some instructive advice for those who served in Afghanistan, after we all saw the difficult pullout from Kabul City.

He posed the question so many veterans have been thinking, "Was their service worth it?" and he set up his standard to judge that question: "Did you serve your best, and keep your honor clean? If yes, then you did your part to keep America safe."

To all of us veterans, General Dunford's statement is not mere lofty words. As a retired Blackhawk pilot, I can tell you from my own time in the Army, veterans are some of the best Americans you will ever come across; they raised their hand when their country called. It is up to us to keep faith with these remarkable women and men who did *their* part.

Veterans deserve the best education they can get for their hard-earned GI Bill dollars. As a country, we should accept nothing less. If a school doesn't garner even one out of ten students willing to pay out of pocket, schools need to know veterans aren't a lifeline to inflate their programs.

Closing this loophole has been a long time in the making, and we ask that you remember the last words Travis said before he went overseas—a mantra that he lived his life by— "if not me, then who?"

Will this Department live up to the high standard that he set for us all?

We are grateful for the opportunity to speak here today.

...Thank you.