

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Kolin Wilkins. In February 2020, I enrolled at Vista College to pursue an associate's degree in medical insurance coding and billing. One of the reasons I enrolled was that they had advertised their ability to get students interesting externships and prestigious jobs. I fully bought into the school's self-promotion and hoped to use my degree to get a job at VA to help other veterans like me. The school closed in October 2021 when I was just five weeks away from graduating. If I had known the school was having so many problems, I would never have gone in the first place. I did not get any value for the GI Bill benefits I earned from my time in the Army.

When I first enrolled, I could tell that the school was not all it had cracked itself up to be. Still, there were lots of other veterans there and I liked many of my teachers, so I decided to see it through.

Then, five weeks before I was set to graduate, the school abruptly closed. We had no warning. Up until the last moment, we were being encouraged to sign up for new classes. It seems like only the people at the very top of the school knew that the school was going to close. I had been at the school for close to two years and was so close to finishing my degree, but all of that time was just thrown in the trash. I was—and am—so frustrated. Because of the school closure, I was unable to participate in the externship program. Even though I was so close to finishing my degree, I have not been able to get a job in billing and coding.

After the school's closure, I heard a news story that the owner of Vista College is now involved with another school, which just seems really unfair. I think more should be done to protect students and veterans from schools that are on the brink of closing.

Thank you for your time.