

MEDIA ADVISORY

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VETERANS TO TESTIFY MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5 ABOUT HOW UNFAIR PRACTICES & FAILED OVERSIGHT SADDLE GIs WITH DEBT & FUEL THE STUDENT DEBT CRISIS

AS U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION STEPS UP OVERSIGHT, VETS CALL ON GOV'T TO TIGHTEN ACCREDITATION STANDARDS & PROTECT STUDENTS FROM RIP-OFFS

***“The system is broken. Now is the time to close the floodgates, end the ripoffs,
and start raising education standards.”***

WASHINGTON, DC - February 2, 2024- Beginning on **Monday, February 5**, veterans and military-connected students from **Illinois, Minnesota, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas** who were mistreated by their school or defrauded by poor-quality schools will testify before the US Department of Education -- blowing the whistle on lax oversight and widespread abuse as the government prepares to tighten college authorization and accreditation standards. Veterans testified at the January public comment, and additional veterans will testify in March during the last public comment hearing of the Program Integrity Institutional Quality Negotiated Rulemaking Committee.

The veterans will also be available for 1:1 Interviews after testifying.

Their testimony comes as the federal government works to meet a November deadline to crack down on sham and low-quality colleges that [take money](#) from US taxpayers and students in exchange for degrees that are too often worthless.

The current accreditation system is notoriously loose -- rarely policing the worst-performing colleges, and lacking adequate standards to assess the educational quality of programs that gain eligibility for GI Bill benefits and federal student aid through accreditation.

“Veterans are rightfully furious when they realize that an accredited school—approved by both the Department of Education and the VA— failed to provide a marketable degree or a quality education in return for their hard-earned GI Bill benefits,” said Della Justice, Vice President for Legal Affairs at Veterans Education Success, a national nonprofit that fights for the GI Bill and the rights of veterans to utilize their education benefits.

“Student veterans rely on the government’s system for school oversight, but the system is broken,” added Justice. “We are pleased the Department is undertaking much-needed reform. Now is the time to close the floodgates and improve the standards so that student veterans get the education and outcomes they deserve.”

Veterans Testifying February 5-8, 2024 Available for Interviews: **REGISTER [HERE](#) to WATCH LIVESTREAM**

2024 TESTIMONY DATE & TIME	COLLEGE PROGRAM	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	BRANCH	VETERAN'S TOWN	STATE
February 5, 3:36-3:39 ET	Colorado Technical University	Cheri	Carter	Navy	Avon Township	IL
February 5 3:39 – 3:42 ET	Vista College	Kolin	Wilkins	Army	Houston	TX
February 6 3:36 – 3:39 ET	Living Arts College	Nico	Castillo	Army	Garner	NC
February 7 3:33 – 3:36 ET	Stratford University	Henry	Hawley	Navy	Robinfell	MN
February 7 3:36 – 3:39 ET	Fisk University	Sharon	Edwards	Military spouse	Clarksville	TN

Veterans Are Available for 1:1 Interviews after Testifying; contact Ana Cobian 323.360.1827; ana.cobian@wardcirclestrategies.com

Veterans Education Success is a bipartisan, nonprofit organization whose mission is 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 postsecondary education programs. The organization offers free help, advice, and college and career counseling for the GI Bill. It helps veterans participate in their democracy by engaging with policymakers. Veterans Education Success also provides non-partisan policy expertise to federal and state policymakers and conducts non-partisan research on issues of concern to student veterans. Additional information is available at vetsedsuccess.org.

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