

REPUBLICANS
MIKE BOST, ILLINOIS, CHAIRMAN
AUMUA AMATA COLEMAN RADEWAGEN, AMERICAN SAMOA
JACK BERGMAN, MICHIGAN
NANCY MACE, SOUTH CAROLINA
MARIANETTE MILLER-MEEKS, IOWA
GREGORY F. MURPHY, NORTH CAROLINA
DERRICK VAN ORDEN, WISCONSIN
MORGAN LUTTRELL, TEXAS
JUAN CISCOMANI, ARIZONA
KEITH SELF, TEXAS
JEN KIGGANS, VIRGINIA
ABE HAMADEH, ARIZONA
KIMBERLYN KING-HINDS, NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
TOM BARRETT, MICHIGAN

JON CLARK
STAFF DIRECTOR

U.S. House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS
364 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
[HTTP://VETERANS.HOUSE.GOV](http://veterans.house.gov)

DEMOCRATS
MARK TAKANO, CALIFORNIA, RANKING MEMBER
JULIA BROWNLEY, CALIFORNIA
CHRIS PAPPAS, NEW HAMPSHIRE
MORGAN MCGARVEY, KENTUCKY
DELIA RAMIREZ, ILLINOIS
NIKKI BUDZINSKI, ILLINOIS
TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY, NEW YORK
MAXINE DEXTER, OREGON
HERB CONAWAY, NEW JERSEY
KELLY MORRISON, MINNESOTA
MAGGIE GOODLANDER, NEW HAMPSHIRE
MATT REEL
DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

September 14, 2026

The Honorable Orice Williams Brown
Acting Comptroller General
Government Accountability Office
441 G Street NW Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Acting Comptroller Williams Brown:

The federal government's commitment to those who have served in the Armed Forces includes helping veterans pursue higher education and develop the skills needed to succeed in the civilian workforce. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) administers the largest such program through the Post-9/11 GI Bill veterans educational assistance program. In fiscal year 2025, more than 600,000 veterans and eligible beneficiaries received Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits, with total payments exceeding \$10 billion, according to VA data.¹

Given the program's scale and significance, Congress would benefit from a comprehensive assessment of its economic and fiscal impacts. While the Post-9/11 GI Bill has supported educational opportunities for hundreds of thousands of veterans, less is known about its effects on educational attainment, earnings outcomes across different educational pathways and demographics, and the relationship between federal program costs and economic outcomes for both veterans and the federal government. An older, third-party analysis of the original GI Bill documented substantial economic returns. Establishing appropriate baseline measures for the Post-9/11 GI Bill would enable Congress to assess program effectiveness over time and inform congressional oversight and future policy considerations regarding veterans' education benefits. A better understanding of the economic impacts of the Post-9/11 GI Bill would also inform policy and oversight decisions that would protect education benefits for future veterans.

Accordingly, we request that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) examine the cost-benefit profile of the Post-9/11 GI Bill and address the following questions:

- 1) How does the Post-9/11 GI Bill influence veterans' postsecondary educational attainment, including enrollment and completion, in comparison to the expected educational attainment without access to such a program?

¹Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration, Annual Benefits Report Fiscal Year 2025, (May 2026).

- 2) How do the average federal expenditures associated with a Post-9/11 GI Bill beneficiary compare with federal expenditures for a nonveteran obtaining a comparable degree?
- 3) What are the estimated costs and benefits associated with the Post-9/11 GI Bill, including its effects on educational attainment, lifetime earnings, and federal revenues and expenditures? Please provide the costs and benefits separately for beneficiaries, the federal government, and society as a whole.
- 4) Given available data, how do the estimated effects of the Post-9/11 GI Bill on veterans' educational attainment and lifetime earnings compare with those for the GI Bill benefits provided to World War II veterans, relative to the costs of providing benefits under each program?
- 5) How do outcomes for Post-9/11 GI Bill beneficiaries vary across demographic and other characteristics, including service-connected disability status and rural versus urban geography?
- 6) What are the educational and employment outcomes of Post-9/11 GI Bill beneficiaries across educational pathways, including four-year degree programs (at public and private institutions), two-year degree programs, and apprenticeship/OJT programs?

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I look forward to your responses to these inquiries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D Van Orden". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Derrick" abbreviated as "D" and the last name "Van Orden" written in full.

DERRICK VAN ORDEN

Chairman

Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

Cc: The Honorable Chris Pappas, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity