

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 24, 2019

The Honorable Mark T. Esper
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1400 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1400

Dear Secretary Esper:

We write to urge you to restore a 2014 Department of Defense (DoD) policy that would enable the concurrent use of Federal Tuition Assistance and Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR) benefits for Reserve Component servicemembers. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

In July 2014, DoD reinterpreted Instruction 1322.25 so that Reserve Component servicemembers receiving DoD-funded tuition assistance (TA) would no longer be allowed to receive concurrent MGIB-SR benefits. Conversely, their counterparts who qualify for Montgomery GI Bill-Active Duty (MGIB-AD) or the Post-9/11 GI Bill are, by statute, able to simultaneously use DoD tuition assistance and GI Bill benefits.

The DoD has the authority to revert to its previous interpretation of DoD Instruction 1322.25 and restore parity between Reserve Component servicemembers and Post-9/11 GI Bill beneficiaries. If the DoD were to take such action, Reserve Component servicemembers would be permitted to receive TA as well as their full MGIB-SR benefits to cover tuition and fees, as well as a lump sum to pay for books, supplies, equipment, housing, and other educational costs.

The brave men and women who serve in our Armed Forces choose to serve for a number of reasons and make many sacrifices in the defense of our country. The benefits provided by the Montgomery GI Bill and DoD-funded TA are valuable incentives that can help the Reserve Components meet their recruiting and retention goals by providing financial means for servicemembers to obtain a college degree.

In December 2018, the Acting Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness indicated support for “any plan that allows MGIB-SR beneficiaries to utilize their MGIB-SR benefits concurrently with TA benefits to the same extent as those receiving Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits.” We urge you to revisit the 2014 DoD policy and reinstate the concurrent use of TA and MGIB-SR in order to uphold the promises made to our servicemembers and ensure the readiness of our all-volunteer force.

Thank you for your consideration of our request, and for your commitment to our servicemembers and their families.

Sincerely,



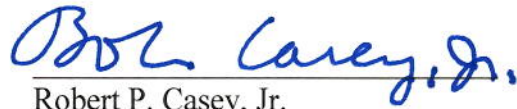
John Hoeven
U.S. Senator



Patrick Leahy
U.S. Senator



Lindsey O. Graham
U.S. Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
U.S. Senator



John Boozman
U.S. Senator



Jon Tester
U.S. Senator



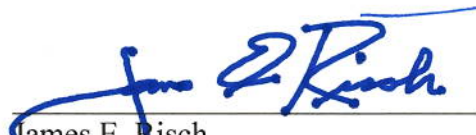
Kevin Cramer
U.S. Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
U.S. Senator



Steve Daines
U.S. Senator



James E. Risch
U.S. Senator



Shelley Moore Capito
U.S. Senator



Mike Crapo
U.S. Senator



M. Michael Rounds
U.S. Senator