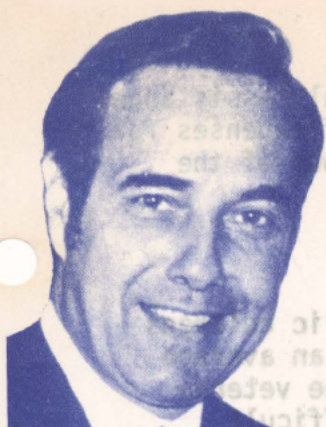


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NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.—Kans.)

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STATEMENT BY SENATOR BOB DOLE ON THE COMPREHENSIVE VIETNAM ERA VETERANS EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS ACT BEFORE THE SENATE VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE APRIL 10, 1974

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to testify before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee today. The joint testimony submitted to the Committee by Senators McGovern, Mathias and Inouye and myself adequately spells out our reasons for introducing S. 2789, the Comprehensive Vietnam Era Veterans Educational Benefits Act, and the importance of its provisions. However, I would just like to underscore the particular importance of this bill to Vietnam veterans in Kansas.

Most Urgent Need

The issue with the greatest urgency is probably the extension of eligibility from 8 to 10 years. Veterans counselors at universities in Kansas advise me that of the approximately 12,000 Vietnam veterans attending school, as many as one-third may lose eligibility on June 1, 1974, unless this measure is passed.

I would hope that we in the Senate can act quickly on this particular provision. With only a short time remaining until eligibility runs out, the importance of getting legislation passed with this measure included is especially great. I hope the veteran will not become the victim of a political controversy, where his benefits expire altogether while Congress is unable to decide how to improve them. It may be necessary to act on a separate bill to extend eligibility in order to meet the deadline and I trust in this Committee's judgment in choosing the most expeditious course of action.

It is only fair that these veterans receive an extension of eligibility since the present G.I. Bill, when first enacted in 1966, did not provide enough assistance to make it possible for very many veterans to get further education. The subsistence allowance under the G.I. Bill in 1966 was only \$100 per month for single veterans. And this was less than the \$110 per month that Korean veterans were able to receive in 1957-58.

Financial Needs

The low assistance rates in the early stages of the Vietnam Era G.I. Bill provide an important reason to increase the tuition and subsistence payments along the lines proposed by the Comprehensive Vietnam Era Educational Benefits Act of 1973. Many of these men and women who could not afford further schooling earlier now have families and financial commitments. Increasing financial assistance will provide these and also those with marginal jobs the means to get advanced training to improve their career potential.

The figures from Kansas show that Vietnam veterans need a higher level of financial assistance. Tuition and fees at public universities in Kansas range from \$390 to \$544. With an assistance rate of \$1,980 for single veterans in a nine month academic year, each veteran must make up a difference of \$600 to \$1,500 each year, according to the individual's curriculum and living expenses. The situation is even more difficult for veterans with dependents. VA assistance falls short by \$1,300 to \$3,000 or more. The differences between VA assistance and school expenses are difficult or impossible to make up in part time or summer jobs for many veterans.

This is why I support the measures in S. 2789 to increase monthly assistance by 13.6% and to provide tuition payments. The attached statement of expenses for veterans at Kansas State University provides a more detailed breakdown of the financial requirements veterans face at public universities.

Tuition Payments

A particular note should be made on tuition payments. Non-public colleges in Kansas require annual tuitions ranging from \$1,150 to \$2,100 for an average of \$1,500. This is about \$1,000 higher than for public schools. The veteran who desires to attend private colleges obviously has a much more difficult financial problem. The only way to be fair to him is to provide tuition payments. I think the support our bill has received in the Senate is indicative of widespread agreement on this.

While there has been much concern about possible abuses of tuition payments, I believe the solution is a matter of adequate statutory safeguards and guidelines and proper administration. The expertise of the Committee members in devising safeguards is welcomed by my colleagues and me and I hope oversight hearings later will help hold abuses to a minimum. While there may always be abuses when a question of money is involved, I feel that the question of equal educational opportunities for all veterans is too important to be sacrificed to this concern.

Mr. Chairman, again I want to express my appreciation for these hearings, and to express my hope that the issue of improving veterans' educational benefits will be handled expeditiously.

EXPENSES FOR A VETERAN AT KSU¹

	<u>SINGLE</u>	<u>MARRIED/NO CHILDREN</u>
Tuition & Fees	\$ 526	\$ 526
Books	100	100
Housing & Food Costs	900 - 1600 ²	1600 - 2700 ²
Clothing & Misc.	460 ³	805 ³
Auto Expenses	175	175
(Gas, Oil, etc)		
Insurance		
Auto	200	105
Health	46 ⁴	109 ⁴
Life	180	225
	<u>\$2600 - 3300</u>	<u>\$3600 - 4700</u>
VA Benefits	\$1980	\$2349

¹Based on a 9-month academic period. For out-of-state students, add \$790 to the totals.

²Housing and food are the two greatest variables in the Kansas State University area. The housing problem is reinforced by the proximity of Fort Riley, a source or young, college-age soldiers who compete for the same basic type of housing. Apartment complexes range from dangerously inadequate at \$100 per month to \$300+ for luxury living. Many veterans are faced with having little or no choice of which place to rent.

³The figures used in official University publications for expenses have not, for the exception of fees, been changed since prior to 1968.

⁴Mutual of Omaha Student Health Program.