



Office of
Jason Crowell State
Senator

The Crowell Connection



Senator Jason Crowell – Serving Bollinger, Cape Girardeau, Madison, Mississippi, Perry, and Scott Counties.

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Supporting Our Military Men & Women

Missouri Returning Hero's Education Act

The soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines that are willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for our freedoms are the bravest men and women we will ever know. In an effort to continuously express our appreciation to these military heroes who willingly leave their homes and put their lives in danger in order to protect this country, and as Chairman of the Senate Veterans Committee I worked with Senator Maida Coleman (D-St. Louis, MO) on a bipartisan basis to pass the Missouri Returning Hero's Education Act this past session.



Many returning veterans utilize the GI Bill to pay for their higher education, but the federal program only provides a flat monthly rate for veterans. This leaves many unable to afford their tuition, room, and board. Senate Bill 830, also known as the Missouri Returning Heroes' Education Act, caps tuition at state-funded universities to \$50 a credit hour for combat veterans who have served after September 11, 2001. Veterans would have 10 years after their honorable discharge to enroll in the program and would need to maintain a 2.5 grade-point average while taking classes.

Students at Southeast Missouri State, for example, pay approximately \$176.80 per credit hour. During the Spring 2008 semester at Southeast Missouri State, 147 veterans were using the GI Bill to help pay for their higher education—a number that is fairly low compared to previous years due to the amount of military students that are currently deployed. Tuition at state schools throughout Missouri range up to \$240 a credit hour. By lessening this financial burden to \$50, these veterans would be able to afford necessities without struggling to make ends meet.

I hear many stories of brave men and women who have dropped everything in order to serve their country. For some, this means leaving their family, giving up a job they enjoy, or stalling their educational goals—all this for the good of their country. This past session I was contacted by a member of the Missouri National Guard from Cape



Girardeau. He explained that upon his recruitment at age 17, he signed up for the G.I. Bill which promised eight semesters of education benefits, but, due to being activated during Operation Iraqi Freedom, his education was postponed for four semesters. After fulfilling his six-year commitment with the National Guard in 2006, he was honorably discharged. Upon trying to re-enroll for college he learned that he was no longer eligible for the G.I. Bill due to the fact that he was not an active Guard member. This hero, who had maintained a 3.9 GPA while in college, still had four semesters remaining on his original enlistment entitlement of education benefits was being penalized for serving in deployment operations.

Our returning heroes deserve our deepest appreciation, and this legislation provides one way for the state of Missouri to thank the men and women who sacrifice so much to protect us.

Contact Me

As always, I appreciate hearing your comments, opinions and concerns. Please feel free to contact me in Jefferson City at (573) 751-2459. You may write to me at Jason Crowell; Missouri Senate; State Capitol; Jefferson City, MO 65101, or email me at:

jcrowell@senate.mo.gov or visit me on the web at <http://www.senate.mo.gov/crowell>.

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