

To: Members of the Senate Committee on Education
From: J. Martin, Institute of Technology student/combat veteran
Subject: SB 1544: Relating to regulation of post-secondary institutions of education
Date: February 4, 2020

Dear Senators:

I am writing about SB 1544 in regards to the regulation of post-secondary institutions of education, and strongly encourage you to oppose this legislation as written. As a Post 9/11 GI BILL recipient and combat veteran, I have benefited greatly from being able to attend school at the Institute of Technology in Salem, OR using 100% of my earned benefits. While I am nearly finished with the program, I think it would be a disgrace to take away such an opportunity from my fellow veterans.

Whereas the language in the bill states "...predatory for-profit colleges are incentivized by this 90/10 loophole to aggressively recruit veterans", I can state that I was definitely not recruited into this program, and made the decision entirely of my own volition. Rather, I saw it as an exciting opportunity to easily take my first steps into a medical career.

This proposed bill will severely limit educational opportunities for veterans of low income like myself. Post-secondary educational institutions such as the Institute of Technology in Salem, OR, offering training to become a Certified Medical Assistant, are not prevalent in the state of Oregon. While one can receive such training from community colleges, it is not always an appealing alternative. At the Institute of Technology one can quickly gain entrance into the program at almost any time, whereas gaining entrance to such programs at community colleges can take up to two years (depending on the medical program) given limited cohorts.

Furthermore, the Institute of Technology offers a wide variety of class schedules, allowing great flexibility for Veterans with a nuclear family to take care of, and/or one that has a regular job to attend to.

Given the restrictions of attending community colleges for medical training I strongly believe that post secondary institutions as such remain fully funded, allowing veterans to make full use of the Post 9/11 GI BILL benefits that they have earned.

My experience at the Institute of Technology Salem, OR has thus far been quite fulfilling and rewarding. The instructors are experts in their fields, care about their students' success, and there is an inherent camaraderie amongst the students fostering a positive learning environment that leads to a viable career in the medical industry of which there is exponential growth and demand.

In closing I ask that you oppose the legislation of SB 1544, and allow our veterans to continue having the freedom of post secondary education options.

You may contact me at (971) 237-3672 to discuss this matter further if you wish.

Sincerely,

Joseph Martin