



## **Isakson and Roe Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020**

On January 5, 2021, the President signed the *Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020* ([P.L.116-315](#)) into law. This new law brings significant changes to Veterans' education benefits. Many of the changes enhance or expand education benefits for Veterans, Service members, families and survivors and provide for the improvement and/or expansion of various GI Bill® programs.

Expands eligibility under the Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship program to allow scholarships for those enrolled in dual-secondary degrees and health care professionals completing clinical training to become licensed to practice in a State or locality. This section also ensures benefits under the Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship program are not subject to the months of entitlement limitations under section 3695 of title 38, U.S.C. Effective: *January 5, 2021*.



This section adds a requirement that schools and training programs be financially responsible, instead of the student, for benefits paid directly to an educational institution pursuant to the Post-9/11 GI Bill® for tuition and fees or the Yellow Ribbon program, and advance payments of initial educational assistance, without consideration of whether the overpayment was the result of the willful or negligent failure of the school. Effective: *January 5, 2021*.

This section provides greater detail on the limitations on the type of advertising, sales, and marketing that schools can undertake and remain eligible for GI Bill® funds. The new standards would align VA with those applicable for the schools participating in the Federal Student Aid program. This section would also create a tiered penalty system for institutions that do not comply with the law and sets up a mechanism for institutions to work with the SAAs and the VA on coming back into compliance. It also places the decision authority with the Under Secretary for Benefits, with an appeal to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. These decision authorities are non

Simplifies the extensions of time limits to use certain educational and VR&E benefits. The current limitation that the interruption must be due to a school closure (permanent or temporary) continues; however, the delimiting date will be extended for the entire COVID-19 period (March 1, 2020 – December 21, 2021 = 661 days) with the delimiting date period resuming on December 22, 2021. Effective: **January 5, 2021**.

This section ensures that a Veteran who is enrolled in an OJT program or apprenticeship and is unable to fulfill the 120-hour requirement due to unemployment during COVID-19 or inability to attend the program in person due to COVID-19 is not negatively impacted. This section recognizes the number of hours the individual was able to work, to receive payment from the VA. It also allows a Veteran to roll-over hours worked in excess of 120 hours from the previous month to the subsequent month to achieve the required 120 hours for full-time benefits. Effective: **January 5, 2021**.

This section amends relevant statutes to ensure the COVID-19 protections afforded to students in earlier legislation (PLs 116-128 and 116-140) includes “training establishments” in addition to “educational institutions”. Effective: **January 5, 2021**.

This section amends the Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 to ensure that a student’s entitlement and payment allowances are not charged for the time the student’s payments are continued after the closure or program hiatus (4 -week payments). Effective: **January 5, 2021**.

This section expands the Veteran Employment through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) pilot program to transitioning service members