



November 16, 2017

Chairman Lamar Smith
Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson
Members of the Committee
House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
2321 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Johnson, and Members of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee:

On behalf of Student Veterans of America (SVA), a coalition of student veteran organizations on nearly 1,500 college and university campuses across the country and representing more than 1.1 million student veterans in higher education, I am writing to express our support of HR 4323, the *Supporting Veterans in STEM Careers Act*.

This legislation is important for student veterans. It includes the National Science Foundation creating an outreach plan and implementing data tracking measures for veterans pursuing STEM research and educational opportunities. The Supporting Veterans in STEM Careers Act also provides that the Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy will create a National Science and Technology Council subcommittee to oversee federal programs and policies for veterans and their families transitioning and training for STEM careers.

In the first six years since passage of the Post-9/11 GI Bill, student veterans have earned at least 51,486 STEM degrees.¹ Within STEM, student veterans earn degrees in computer and information sciences (21,800), engineering technologies (10,153), engineering (8,057), biological and biomedical sciences (4,311), as well as other critical areas necessary for public and private sector advancement and success in the twenty first century world.²

In the summer of 2017, SVA spearheaded the unanimous passage of the Forever GI Bill, HR 3218. Along with a coalition of more than 60 organizations, we were proud to be a part of the effort that will impact millions of student veterans. As long-time proponents of the GI Bill STEM Extension Act, we were also proud to be involved in the inclusion of STEM provisions in Forever GI Bill.³

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) may provide additional Post-9/11 educational assistance to eligible veterans who are enrolled in post-secondary education programs that require more than the standard number of credit hours for STEM degree completion or for those veterans who have earned post-secondary degrees in STEM fields and are enrolled in teaching certification programs.

¹ Cate, C.A., Lyon, J.S., Schmeling, J., & Bogue, B.Y. (2017). *National Veteran Education Success Tracker: A Report on the Academic Success of Student Veterans Using the Post-9/11 GI Bill*. Student Veterans of America, Washington, D.C., http://invest.studentveterans.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/NVEST-Report_FINAL.pdf

² *Id.*

³ See Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017, H.R. 3218, Sec. 111, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/3218/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22harry+w.+colmery%22%5D%7D&r=1>.

We applaud this collaboration between members of the House Veterans Affairs Committee and the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee and look forward to future efforts to work together on behalf of veterans.

Please contact me at jared.lyon@studentveterans.org or 202-223-4710 with any questions about this issue, or the great work of our student veterans across the country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jared Lyon', enclosed within a large, loopy oval shape.

Jared Lyon