

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Rogers and Cole and Ranking Members Lowey and DeLauro,

As you work to finalize the Fiscal Year 2017 appropriations bill, we write to request that you support the Centers of Excellence for Veteran Student Success Program within the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies account. This program will help our nation's veterans succeed in school with grants to colleges and universities for Veteran Student Centers.

Over one million veterans and active duty service members in the United States attend college every year, and many face unique challenges in transitioning from the battlefield to the classroom. Some student veterans have been away from school for long periods, are older than their peers, have families to support, or struggle with service-related disabilities. These hurdles sometimes lead talented veterans to drop out of school before graduating and may limit potential job opportunities.

In response to these challenges, colleges and universities have begun creating Veteran Student Centers to provide a one-stop-shop for academic support, networking opportunities, peer mentorship, financial assistance, counseling, and career services. Veteran service organizations and higher education associations agree that these centers create a valuable network for student veterans that can increase graduation rates and improve job prospects. Over 130 Members of Congress from both parties are cosponsoring H.R. 1399, the *Veterans Education Empowerment Act*, to help colleges and universities across the country establish new Veterans Student Centers and improve existing ones.

We urge you to support student veterans by restoring the Fund for Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) and providing strong support for the Centers of Excellence for Veteran Student Success Program.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

Lois Frankel
Member of Congress

Gus Bilirakis
Member of Congress

Mark Takano
Member of Congress