

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

October 9, 2025

The Honorable Douglas A. Collins
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Collins:

As the Ranking Members on the Congressional committees of jurisdiction, we are writing to express serious concern regarding reports that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is currently failing to process and disburse critical educational and housing benefits provided under the Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33), Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E, Chapter 31), and the Dependents Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 35). While we understand the lapse in government funding has halted some VA services, it should not impact the processing and payment of these veteran benefits.

We have received reports from numerous Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) and constituents indicating that VA has failed to deliver normally scheduled monthly housing allowances (MHA) and tuition payments. These payments are essential, mandatory funds that veterans and their families rely on for food, rent or mortgage payments, immediate needs, and financial stability.

The current operational posture is a stark departure from historical precedent. During previous government shutdowns, including those under the Obama and Trump Administrations, VA education benefits were processed and paid, ensuring student veterans could afford basic necessities, pay for housing, and remain enrolled in school.

Furthermore, the public-facing VA.gov website currently indicates that certain mandatory benefit payments will be processed normally during a funding lapse. The discrepancy between the VA's stated policy and the reality being experienced on the ground by veterans, survivors, and their families is unacceptable and is creating immediate financial distress. VA's failure to pay out these earned benefits is causing direct harm.

To fully understand the cause and scope of this interruption, the Committee requests the following information no later than **October 13, 2025**:

1. A detailed explanation for why any GI Bill or VR&E related payments are delayed, pending, or not paid out for any reason during the current lapse in government funding.
2. The exact volume of unprocessed and delayed payments broken out by number of impacted beneficiaries and dollar amounts in Chapters 31, 33, and 35 as of today's date.

3. A specific timeline for the resumption of all payments and a comprehensive plan detailing how and when the VA intends to issue back pay.
4. Documentation explaining the discrepancy between the VA's operational status during this shutdown and the historical precedent of continued payments during prior funding lapses, as well as the information currently presented on the VA.gov website regarding benefit continuity.
5. The Department's prior, current, and planned communications with the affected beneficiaries on the disruption of payments in the lead up to and during this lapse in appropriations.

Veterans, survivors, and their families have earned these benefits, and their ability to seek higher education should not be impacted by this Administration during a Congressional funding dispute. We urge you to take immediate steps to restore these critical payments and expect a prompt, substantive response to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Mark Takano
Ranking Member
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs



Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs