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Veterans Journal



A beefed-up GI Bill would spur economy

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Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), the nation's first and largest nonpartisan organization for veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, believes there is one proven strategy for economic growth in America that no one is talking about — a new GI Bill.

IAVA executive director Paul Rieckhoff said recently that when President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the original GI Bill in 1944, he ensured that eight million World War II veterans would be able to afford an education. It resulted in higher national productivity, consumer spending and tax revenue. It was then estimated by economists that every dollar spent sending the Greatest Generation to college added seven dollars to the national economy.

Rieckhoff maintains that the educational benefits available to today's veterans are far inferior to what their predecessors received. Today's GI Bill covers less than 70 percent of the average cost at a public college and less than two years at a typical private college.

For details on this proposed GI Bill, visit www.iava.org/documents/ANewGIBill.pdf. IAVA will release more in-depth reports on pressing topics, including traumatic brain injury, mental health, military readiness and veterans' struggle for care and benefits. IAVA represents more than 80,000 veterans and grass-roots supporters in all 50 states. For more information, go online to www.iava.org.

Lanzi: Reserve classroom space for disabled vets

Disabled Rhode Island veterans can attend the state's public colleges for free, but Sen. Beatrice A. Lanzi, D-Cranston, believes more could be done.

Several years ago, then-Representative Lanzi was the sponsor of the original bill that allowed veterans to register for tuition-free classes if space was available. The senator's recently proposed legislation, 2008-S 2052, would amend the law to allow as many as five qualified veterans to sign up for courses during the normal registration period. Qualified applicants beyond the initial five would still be granted admission on a space-available basis.

The bill, which has several co-sponsors, is now before the Senate Finance Committee.

New resource guide

John Powers, a 2007 University of Rhode Island graduate and currently a Rhode Island College graduate student, recently completed and published online a “Veterans Resource Guide for Rhode Island Residents” at www.operationvets.com.

Powers’ goal was to unite all the resources available to Rhode Island veterans and their families and continue doing so for all 49 other states to ensure all returning soldiers and their families are getting the care and support they need.

The resource guide includes sections on veterans outreach, consulting, presentations, peer support, a question and answer section, and more. Its 70-plus pages are aimed at helping veterans, their families, friends and supporters.

The guide, which took Powers a year to compile, is available also in hard copy and is suitable for a returning veteran or a family member dealing with deployments. To reach Powers by phone, call (401) 374-9635, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

House Advisory Council

The House Veterans Affairs Permanent Advisory Council meets at 10 a.m. today in Room 135 at the State House.

8th Air Force

The Rhode Island chapter meets at 11 this morning at Bickford’s restaurant, Jefferson Boulevard, Warwick.

VFW

Tomorrow, Service Officer James Boardman will be at the Westerly Post at 113 Beach St., from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., to help veterans unable to travel to the Providence VA office to submit claims or inquire about benefits. The Department of R.I. and auxiliary will visit the R.I. Veterans Home, in Bristol, tomorrow at 1 p.m. to host bingo and distribute gifts to the residents, and on Valentine’s Day will visit the Providence VA Hospital at 10 a.m., with gift bags for the patients. Washington County Post 916, 155 High St., Wakefield, will meet tomorrow at 7:30 p.m. A blood drive sponsored by the St. Joseph’s Hall Post members will be held on Saturday at 99 Louis St., Woonsocket, from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

DAV

Lawson-Raiola Chapter 15 Post will meet tomorrow at 2 p.m. in the Bisbano Building North, Rhode Island Veterans Home, Metacom Avenue, Bristol. Mount Pleasant Chapter 21 will meet on Thursday at 7 p.m. at VFW Post 10011, 354 Fruit Hill Ave., North Providence.

American Legion

Shields Post 43, at 662 West Shore Rd. in Warwick, will have an auxiliary unit meeting tomorrow at 7 p.m. to discuss bylaw revisions to be voted next month, and a juniors unit meeting on Saturday at 10 a.m. Post 39 will meet Thursday at 7 p.m., at 1958 Kingstown Rd., Peace Dale.

Korean War Vets

Northern R.I. Chapter 3 will meet at 10:30 p.m. Wednesday in the Chepachet Senior Center, 1210 Putnam Pike.

Coast Guard Auxiliary

Flotilla 78 will meet Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. in the Aspray Boathouse, Pawtuxet Village, Warwick. Volunteers willing to assist the Coast Guard are welcome; boat ownership or experience is not required. For more information, visit www.cgaux0708.org or call (401) 884-5638.

Military Officers Association

The Narragansett Bay Chapter will meet Friday at Evelyn's Villa, 272 Cowesett Ave., West Warwick, starting at noon, with lunch at 12:30 p.m. followed by a speaker. Reservations must be made by today by calling (401) 364-8969.

Seabees

Island X-1 Davisville will meet at the Seabee Museum, 21 Iafate Way, North Kingstown, on Saturday at 9 a.m.

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