

Washington, DC (January 10, 2013) – The Improving Transparency of Education Opportunities for Veterans Act (H.R. 4057) authored by Congressman Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), Vice-Chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, was signed into law today by President Obama. The legislation enhances the Post 9/11 GI Bill, ensuring veterans have access to information that will enable them to use their educational benefits most efficiently and effectively.

“The Improving Transparency of Education Opportunities for Veterans Act provides a one-stop shop for our veterans, ensuring they have the resources they need to pursue a quality education, and ultimately, best position themselves for their future career goals,” said Bilirakis. “As our veterans make the transition from the battlefield to civilian life, we must continue to make them a top priority, and I am proud our Veterans Service Organizations, educational institutions, and my colleagues in the House and Senate came together in support of this shared goal.”

H.R.4057 includes several provisions championed by Bilirakis to improve the lives of our nation's heroes. The bill highlights available educational resources to help GI Bill beneficiaries choose the school best meeting their educational needs. It also limits the total amount of taxpayer dollars which can be paid to senior VA employees in bonuses.

“During the 112th Congress, we came together with the higher education community and the Veterans Service Organizations in our commitment to ensuring that student veterans are getting the very best out of the GI Bill,” said Congressman Jeff Miller, Chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee. “The enactment of H.R. 4057 only strengthens the educational benefits afforded America's veterans, and will give them access to the best available information as they make life-changing decisions about higher education.”

The Dignified Burial of Veterans Act (S. 3202) with language introduced by Bilirakis in the House was also signed into law today by the President. The bill requires the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide caskets or urns for veterans with no next of kin and insufficient resources to cover burial and funeral expenses. The legislation comes after it was discovered that Pvt. Lawrence Davis Jr., a World War II veteran with no next of kin, was buried in a cardboard box at Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell, Fla.

“Private Davis deserved better, and while we cannot go back and rewrite history, the Dignified Burial of Veterans Act ensures another burial, like this, never happens again,” said Bilirakis. “All of our nation’s heroes should be laid to rest the same way they served this country – with dignity and honor – and I am proud to have been a part of this effort.”

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