

Washington, DC -- U.S. Rep. Michael A. Arcuri (NY-24) encouraged veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to apply for new and expanded college opportunities included in legislation supported by Arcuri last year. Area veterans should go to the Veterans' Administration (VA) website <https://www.gibill.va.gov/> to apply for a certificate of eligibility for the new college benefits.

"I want to encourage local veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan to go to the VA website and apply now for new education opportunities so they can attend college and receive a valuable education and training for their next career," **Arcuri said**. "As a nation it is our duty to provide for the brave men and women who serve our county and help to support their families. Helping local veterans access higher education is just one of the many ways in which we are making sure they can thrive and build a great future when they come home."

Last year, Arcuri worked with a bipartisan coalition in Congress to pass legislation that expanded GI Bill education benefits for veterans and their families. The measure takes effect on August 1, 2009 and on Friday, May 1, 2009 veterans could begin to apply for a certificate of eligibility.

The expanded GI Bill restored full, four-year college scholarships to veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars to help make them part of an economic recovery like the veterans of World War II. The legislation also allows veterans to transfer those benefits to family members.

The program provides up to four years of education benefits at a college or university for individuals with at least 90 days of active duty service on or after September 11, 2001 who have been honorably discharged from service. The benefits are correlated to years served and to receive full benefits, a veteran must have served on active duty for three years. Benefits are payable for up to 15 years following release from active duty.

New GI Bill program benefits include:

- Tuition and fees of up to the maximum in-state tuition and fees at a public institution in state;
- A monthly housing allowance at the location of the school, based on the Basic Allowance for Housing for an E-5 with dependents; and,
- An annual books and supplies stipend of up to \$1,000.

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