

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 3, 2026

The Honorable Doug Collins
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20420

The Honorable Cheryl Mason
Veterans Administration Inspector General
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20420

Secretary Collins and Inspector General Mason:

We write to you today with grave concerns about recent *Washington Post* reporting on how many veterans were defrauded of their GI Bill benefits by “slapdash” trade schools and education institutions in Texas, California, New Hampshire, Georgia and Florida.¹ We are troubled by reports of veterans defrauded and how the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) failed to properly investigate schools with obvious signs of fraud across multiple years and presidential administrations.

Since its inception during World War II, the GI Bill was intended to provide veterans with the education and skills necessary to lead productive lives. Veterans earn educational benefits through their service to the United States. Millions of veterans have successfully used this program to obtain education and training from universities, colleges and trade and vocational schools. The Post 9/11 GI Bill provides up to 36 months of educational benefits for veterans who served more than 90 days of active duty after September 11, 2001.

However, as the *Washington Post* reported, some unaccredited for-profit schools have taken advantage of both veterans and VA either by providing substandard education, charging more tuition as compared to non-veterans or aggressively recruiting veterans with little regard for whether the school’s training helps the veteran.² In return for their service, it is our duty to ensure veterans are protected from fraud and scams.

In all, the *Washington Post* found more than \$300 million in fraud at 20 schools that were bilking our veterans. Much of the fraud should have been obvious at first glance. Schools offering courses that cost thousands of dollars but last less than a week should have caused red flags to go

¹ “How predatory trade schools drained \$300 million from the GI Bill and cheated veterans,” by Craig Whitlock and Andrew Ba Tran, *The Washington Post*, August 4, 2026, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/interactive/2026/08/04/gi-bill-schools-charged-huge-sums-train-vets-how-grow-grass-make-fake-rocks/>.

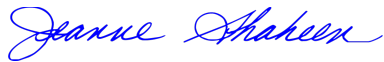
² E.g. “For Profit Higher Education: The Failure to Safeguard the Federal Investment and Ensure Student Success,” Majority Committee Staff Report and Accompanying Minority Committee Staff Views, Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, July 30, 2012, <https://web.archive.org/web/20140704012106/http://www.harkin.senate.gov/help/forprofitcolleges.cfm>.

up at VA. Moreover, the article raises questions about how the Department processes and refers veterans' complaints. While these losses to fraud may only represent a small percentage of the VA's education budget, any loss of funds and adverse impacts to veterans must be swiftly addressed.

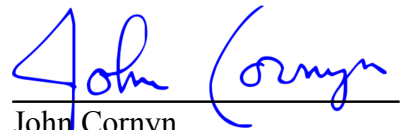
VA has repeatedly said that fraud against veterans is one of its top priorities. It is imperative that we understand how these institutions are allowed to operate and make millions despite multiple oversight measures. Consequently, we call on VA OIG to launch an enhanced investigation into all unaccredited trade schools where veterans are enrolled to ensure the programs meet all applicable requirements. Once any warning sign is identified, VA must act more quickly to disapprove these fraudulent programs from GI Bill eligibility. We also urge the Department and VA OIG to review their processes for accepting and assessing complaints from students and whistleblowers on potentially fraudulent activity and increase funding and personnel for investigating these cases. Finally, we ask that the VA and OIG coordinate with the U.S. Department of Justice and, if appropriate, state attorneys general, to refer more of these cases for prosecution.

We look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



John Cornyn
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator