

3 February 2020

To whom it may concern,

I am writing you today to convey to you how the Montgomery GI Bill and the Post 911 GI Bill has benefited not only myself but my family as well.

As a young man when I graduated high school I was much like many others in the sense I did not have a clear career path or know what I was going to do after high school. I was not pro-military by any means and like most young men I did not like being told what to do by individuals in positions of authority. I had decent grades and thought I would go college, but unfortunately I did not receive a scholarship and my parents were not in a position financially to put me through college. Ultimately, I decided that I would join the military with the intentions of doing four years of service and attending college upon discharge. I elected to participate in the Montgomery GI Bill program during my first 12 months of military service which required me to contribute \$1,200 and in return I would receive \$20,000 to use towards my education after separation.

Sticking to my original plan of going to college I separated from the active duty Army and enrolled in community college using the Montgomery GI Bill. I also decided you join the Oregon Army National Guard to continue to serve not only the nation but my fellow Oregonians on the local level in times of state emergencies if needed. I was recently married with two children trying to do my best to support my family while going to school. Due to personal challenges in my life at the time I only went to college for two terms but knowing I had that benefit to use at a later date gave me piece of mind that I could continue my education when the opportunity presented itself.

After the devastating events on September 11, 2001 I was deployed with the Oregon National Guard in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in the spring of 2003. Since that time I have been deployed four additional times in support of the Global War on Terror. Due to the need of the National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers to support contingency operations around the world since 9/11 the government developed the Post 9/11 GI Bill. This allows National Guard and Reserve service members the opportunity to continue their education without having to join the active duty military as long as they are used at an accredited college or trade school. This also gives the service member the option to transfer their education benefits to their dependents. Once the service member elects to transfer benefits they lose the ability to use them for themselves. I elected to transfer my benefits to my wife and children because I wanted then to have the opportunity to continue their education in order to make a better life for themselves because I found a career working for the railroad and decided not to go back to school.

My family has greatly benefited from my decision and my wife and oldest daughter have both attended Concorde Career College using the Post 9/11 GI Bill. My wife has completed two separate programs at Concorde in Medical Assisting (MA) and Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) in which she graduated with honors. My daughter also completed the MA program at Concorde and is currently a manager of one of the busiest clinics in the Portland area all because she was able to use my transferred benefits. Being able to use the Montgomery GI Bill or the Post 9/11 GI Bill at schools like Concorde increases the likelihood of success for veterans and their family members in starting a career without putting

unnecessary stressors on themselves or their family like attending a university could cause. Without being able to use this benefit at Concorde my wife and daughter would not be in the position they are now with a career that mutually benefits not only their immediate family but the patients that they care for.

Please remember that not allowing these benefits to be used by Veterans or their family members at institutions of higher learning other than the typical community college or state university directly impacts their decision to continue with their education, make a career for themselves, and ultimately takes away an opportunity to support themselves and their families. I personally am extremely grateful that my family has benefitted from this opportunity of being able to attend a school like Concorde.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my family's story.

Very Respectfully,

Bradley Huppunen

Veteran, Husband, Father