

March 18, 2013

The Honorable Charles T. Hagel
Secretary of Defense
100 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-1000

Dear Secretary Hagel:

On behalf of the associations listed below, representing two- and four-year public and private colleges and universities across the country, we write to express our concern with the recent decision by the Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps to suspend new applications for the Military Tuition Assistance (TA) program. We ask you to reconsider the decision to end this important benefit for service members.

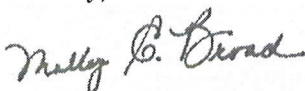
The TA program provides members of the military with up to \$4,500 of tuition assistance per fiscal year to earn college credit, or complete a certificate or degree. The program is a critical investment in our service members and allows them to continue their education and develop their skills while still on active duty. We recognize the difficult decisions that the Defense Department leadership must make in dealing with the spending cuts required by the sequester. However, we believe that a complete elimination of TA benefits for new enrollees places a disproportionate share of the burden of budget reduction on these important education benefits.

Military leaders have consistently recognized the importance of education. As Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey recently put it, "Education is what feeds the hot fusion of innovation, of trust, of commerce and what makes our nation great. It illuminates the path to our greatness."

TA benefits are an important investment in members of the military and their ability to contribute to the defense of our nation. While we appreciate the many considerations that must be taken into account as you implement the sequester, we respectfully ask that you reconsider the decision to eliminate new TA benefits.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Molly Corbett Broad
President

MCB/lw

On behalf of:
American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
American Association of Community Colleges

Military Tuition Assistance Program

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American Association of State Colleges and Universities

American Council on Education

American Indian Higher Education Consortium

Association of American Universities

Association of Community College Trustees

Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities

Association of Public and Land-grant Universities

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities

National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education

National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities

National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators