

# **Training in High-demand Roles to Improve Veteran Employment (THRIVE) Act Bill Summary**

## Section 1: Short Title

### Section 2: COVID-19 Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program

This section amends Section 8006 of the American Rescue Plan Act, which established the COVID-19 Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program.

#### *Determination of High Demand Occupations*

The bill would replace the provision directing the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to use the list of high-demand occupations compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Instead, VA would use this list temporarily. Meanwhile, it would enter into an agreement with a federally funded research and development corporation or other appropriate non-VA entity to complete a study to determine high-demand occupations within 90 days of enactment. VA could add or remove occupations from the list before issuing and publishing a final list within 90 days after completion. VA could also remove occupations after issuance.

#### *Housing Stipend*

The bill would specify that the housing stipend is not available for veterans participating in a program solely through distance learning on a half-time basis or less. It would also clarify the stipend amount provided to individuals otherwise participating on a half time basis.

#### *Employee Assistance*

The bill would add new language directing VA, in consultation with the Department of Labor (DOL), to contact each participating veteran:

- within 30 days after they begin to notify them of employment placement services available upon completion; and
- within 14 days after they complete or terminate participation in the program to facilitate the provision of employment placement services.

#### *Nonprofit Organization*

The bill would add new language directing VA to enter into a memorandum of understanding with one or more qualified nonprofit business associations to facilitate the employment of participating veterans. The association(s) must have at least two years of experience providing job placement services to veterans.

#### *Follow-Up Outreach*

The bill would add new language directing VA, in coordination with DOL, to contact each participating veteran 30, 60, 90, and 180 days after completing the program to ask about their experience in the program and employment status.

### *Quarterly Reports*

The bill would add new language directing DOL to submit reports about participating veterans to Congress one year after enactment and quarterly thereafter. The report shall contain the percent of veterans who found employment within two quarters after exiting the program, the percent of veterans who found employment within four quarters after exiting the program, the median earnings of veterans for the second quarter after exiting the program, and the percent of veterans who attain a recognized postsecondary credential within 12 months after exiting the program.

### *Comptroller General Report*

The bill would add new language directing the Comptroller General to submit a report to Congress on the program's outcomes and effectiveness within 180 days of its termination.

### *Termination*

The bill would change the program's termination provision, which currently prohibits VA from paying assistance under the program after the date that is 21 months after enactment (December 11, 2022). Instead, it would prohibit VA from paying assistance for education that begins on or after December 11, 2022.

### *Funding*

The bill would add a sentence to the funding provision specifying that funds appropriated for the program shall be deposited into the Veterans Benefits Administration Readjustment Benefits account. It also states that no more than \$386 million (the same amount appropriated by Section 8006 of the American Rescue Plan Act) may be obligated or expended to carry out Section 8006 in order to prevent the Congressional Budget Office from scoring the THRIVE Act as new spending.

### *Definitions*

The bill would add definitions for the terms 'covered public health emergency', 'veteran', and 'active service'.

### Section 3: GI Bill Comparison Tool

This section requires that VA include the following information in the GI Bill Comparison Tool:

- whether the institution is listed on the College Navigator website as affiliated with a religion, and if so, which religious denomination;
- whether the Secretary of Education or other head of a federal department or agency has determined that the institution is a minority serving institution and if so, which type(s);
- whether the institution is gender specific.

It also requires the VA to ensure information on the GI Bill Comparison Tool is searchable, to the extent practicable. This section would be effective two years after enactment.

### Section 4: Limitation on Colocation and Administration of State Approving Agencies (SAAs)

This section amends Section 1024 of the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020, which prohibited an SAA from being recognized if it is administered at or co-located with a university or university system whose

courses or programs are subject to its approval. Section 1024 was to take affect 180 days after enactment, but the THRIVE Act would change that to one year and clarify the prohibition.

#### Section 5: For-Profit Conversions

This section amends Section 1022 of the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020, which required SAAs to conduct annual risk-based surveys of an institution for three years after it converts from a for-profit to nonprofit. The THRIVE Act would also include for-profits that convert to public institutions.

#### Section 6: Principles of Excellence

This section amends Section 1018 of the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020, which codified the requirements of the Principles of Excellence Program (Executive Order 13607) in statute and required SAAs to take action against schools that violate them.

For the requirement that schools provide information regarding when required classes will be offered and a timeline to graduate, the THRIVE Act adds “to the extent practicable.”

The THRIVE Act also amends the prohibition on schools carrying out deceptive or persistent recruiting techniques or paying inducements to secure enrollments. It clarifies that these practices may not be carried out by “any person with whom the institution has an agreement to provide educational programs, marketing, advertising, recruiting, or admissions services.” It also rephrases the inducements provision to match language in Section 1020 of the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020, which limits the type of advertising, sales, and marketing that GI Bill schools can conduct.

Section 1018 provided two ways that SAAs could take action against schools – either disapproving a course or recommending VA publish a warning online about the school. The THRIVE Act replaces “disapproving a course” with:

- suspending approval of courses and programs offered by the school by disapproving new enrollments in each course or program offered by that school; or
- revoking approval of courses and programs offered by the school by disapproving all enrollments in each course or program offered by that school.

#### Section 7: Technical Corrections

This section makes technical corrections to the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 regarding section numbering, formatting, and other typographical errors.

#### Section 8: Determination of Budgetary Effects

This section states that the THRIVE Act’s budgetary effects are set forth in a statement submitted to the Congressional Record by the Chair of the House Budget Committee.