



## **Florida Ready for Post 9/11 GI Bill Veteran Influx**

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TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Florida's colleges and universities are admitting increasing numbers of student veterans this fall thanks to the new Post 9/11 GI Bill, which took effect Aug. 1.

The legislation, passed by Congress last year, is the largest and most comprehensive veteran education bill since the original GI Bill of World War II fame. The new bill provides eligible servicemembers and veterans with tuition, fees, a housing allowance and a stipend for books and supplies.

However, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has experienced a delay in processing the large number of applications nationwide. Since each claim requires separate payment transactions for tuition and fees, housing allowance and books stipend, and eligibility criteria are more complex than previous programs, disbursements are expected to be delayed until the backlog can be reduced. There may also be slower disbursements to veterans receiving payments under prior education programs due to the increased demand under the new G.I. Bill.

The Crist Administration, foreseeing a potential for the reimbursement gap, worked with the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs and bill sponsors Rep. Juan Zapata and Sen. Mike Fasano to enact a bill in the 2009 Florida Legislative Session to address delays in tuition disbursement. The bill was signed into law by Gov. Charlie Crist and took effect July 1.

It allows Florida colleges and universities to provide tuition deferments to veteran students when there is a delay in receipt of Post 9/11 GI Bill tuition and fees through no fault of the student.

Participating Florida colleges and universities are aware of the deferment provision available to them. They are protecting enrolling veterans until their tuition and fees are paid for by the VA.

For more information, call toll free (888) 442-4551 or visit the VA's GI Bill Web site at <http://www.gibill.va.gov/> and the Florida Board of Governor's GI Bill Web site at <http://www.service2scholars.org/>.