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New GI Bill Provides Tuition, Other Education Payments for Post 9/11 Vets

Washington, DC – Today, Representatives Ben Ray Luján, Martin Heinrich and Harry Teague announced that New GI Bill benefits will take effect tomorrow, August 1. Last year, Congress enacted the new GI Bill for the 21st Century to restore the promise of a full, four-year college education for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans.

"I am encouraged that the New GI Bill will take effect tomorrow, providing much deserved education benefits for our veterans," said Rep. Luján. "Under the New GI Bill, Iraq and Afghanistan veterans have an opportunity to receive significant education benefits to pave the way for future successes. I encourage Iraq and Afghanistan veterans to apply for this program, which can help those who served us all with an opportunity to achieve their own academic and career goals."

"The GI bill has a history of educating a generation and contributing to unprecedented American prosperity," said Rep. Heinrich. "The new GI bill will give another generation of men and women

who have risked their lives for this country the chance to go to college and have a better chance of pursuing the American dream. My office is here to assist residents in our district take full advantage of this program.”

“Access to a full, four-year college education is one way to express our support and thanks to our troops who have served our nation so bravely since September 11th,” said Congressman Harry Teague, a member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee. “The New GI Bill provides an opportunity for new veterans in New Mexico to further their education and obtain job training, giving them marketable skills that will help them during these difficult economic times – I urge every eligible veteran in New Mexico to take advantage of this program.”

Members of the military--including activated reservists and members of the National Guard--who have been honorably discharged from service, with at least 90 days of active duty service on or after September 11, 2001, could receive up to four academic years of education benefits. These benefits include stipends for housing and books, and are correlated on a sliding scale relative to years served. To receive full benefits you must have served on active duty for three years. Veterans will have up to 15 years after they leave active duty to use their education benefits.

The new college benefit program will pay for:

- tuition and fees up to the maximum in-state tuition and fees at a public institution in your state;
- a monthly housing allowance based on the Basic Allowance for Housing for an E-5 with dependents at the location of the school; and
- an annual books and supplies stipend of up to \$1,000.

It was announced earlier this week that eleven schools, colleges and universities in New Mexico have entered into agreements with the federal Department of Veterans Affairs to participate in the program. Institutions already participating include St. John's College in Santa Fe, University of the Southwest in Hobbs and some graduate programs at the University of New Mexico.

To learn more about the program, visit: <http://newgibill.org/>

Veterans can sign up for benefits by visiting: gibill.va.gov .