

States' Attorneys General Action A Victory for Veterans and the GI Bill

WASHINGTON (June 27, 2012) - Officials of the Department of Veterans Affairs applauded a decision by the attorneys general of several states to give VA the rights to use the GIBill.Com website, after the website's original owners QuinStreet Inc. agreed to give up the internet site to settle a lawsuit by the states.

"This action is a victory for Veterans and a victory for the GI Bill. Veterans and VA applaud the great work by the states' attorneys general, along with Holly Petraeus and her team," said W. Scott Gould, Deputy Secretary for Veterans Affairs. "We all want Veterans to be informed consumers and for schools to meet their obligations in training this Nation's next 'Greatest Generation.'"

Holly Petraeus is assistant director for service member affairs at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

The attorneys general of several states had sued QuinStreet Inc., the owner of the GI Bill.com domain, charging it with deceptive practices by directing Veterans and Service Members on its website exclusively to for-profit schools that were clients of QuinStreet.

The announcement comes as VA is seeking legal authority to trademark the term *GI Bill*. An executive order by President Obama on April 26 directed VA and the Department of Defense to undertake a number of measures to "stop deceptive and misleading" promotional efforts that target the GI Bill educational benefits of Service members, Veterans, and eligible family members and survivors.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill, which was authorized by Congress in 2008, is the most extensive educational assistance

program since the original GI Bill was signed into law in 1944. VA has issued nearly \$20 billion in Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit payments to more than 759,000 people and their educational institutions.

All of VA's education benefits are designed to be flexible and give Veterans the power of choice by enabling them to pursue college degrees, technical certifications, or vocational training according to their preferences and needs, at public, private non-profit and private for-profit schools.

For-profit schools are held to the same approval standards as all other schools, and VA education programs at for-profit institutions are approved by the State Approving Agencies, which act independently on behalf of the federal government to ensure quality education and training is provided to Veterans within each state.

Gould said Veterans should not be recruited aggressively by institutions principally because of financial motives, and that VA's and other federal and state agencies' oversight activities provide strong monitoring. VA is engaging with other federal agencies to provide this oversight, including the departments of Defense, Education, and Justice, as well as the Federal Trade Commission and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

"VA looks forward to helping Veterans make informed decisions by accepting this gift of the GIBill.com domain. We will continue to support our Veterans by helping them obtain the best education of their choosing—a right for which they have bravely served, and which they have rightly earned," Gould said.

For more information on GI Bill programs, please visit www.GIBILL.va.gov or call 1-888-GI-Bill-1

(1-888-442-4551) to speak with a GI Bill representative.