



**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Benefits Administration
Education Service
Washington, D.C. 20420**

January 22, 2025

Greetings School Leadership,

As we embark on a new year, I wish to share several updates impacting Education Service, colleges and universities, training providers, and importantly, our Veterans and their families.

Recommended School Certifying Official (SCO) to GI Bill student ratio

In a December 4, 2023 memo, VA recommended a ratio of one full-time SCO to every 125 GI Bill students. An SCO is considered an employee with the primary responsibility of certifying GI Bill benefits. A recent report shows progress in meeting this ratio, however, there are a substantial number of schools where the SCO/student ratio is well over several hundred. As a former college Vice President and CFO, I understand the impact on budget resources. Yet, the return-on-investment, in additional enrollment and improved retention, is a factor for consideration. The SCO is often the first and regular touchpoint for student Veterans. The ratio is a recommendation only and may be adjusted to reflect additional SCO responsibilities including the administration of other Veteran education programs. Recent court decisions/legislation discussed below may also impact SCO workload and responsibilities.

Rudisill v. McDonough Supreme Court Decision

The Supreme Court decided that beneficiaries who earn educational benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) and the Post-9/11 GI Bill (PGIB) may access benefits under either program for a maximum of 48 months of benefits (up from 36 months). Prior to the Court's decision, though eligible for both benefits, beneficiaries who wanted to use their PGIB benefits had to forfeit using any remaining MGIB benefits. VA estimates this ruling applies to approximately 1,040,000 Veterans who may receive up to an additional 12 months of GI Bill entitlement. Education Service has established a Rudisill decision landing page to provide additional information. [Impact of Rudisill Supreme Court Decision on Veterans' Education Benefits - Education and Training](#).

Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act. On January 2, 2025, President Biden signed into law this sweeping legislation that contains more than 90 provisions that expands health and benefits for Veterans and their families. A summary of the bill can be accessed at [section_by_section_dole_act.pdf](#) (Education - 200 numbered sections - begin on p.16).

Our Veterans and their families deserve our full support for their commitment and sacrifices associated with military service. Thank you for your valued partnership in achieving this goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joseph L. Garcia".

Joseph Garcia
Executive Director, Education Service