

Post-9/11 GI Bill

Many regional airlines are suggesting there is a pilot shortage in the United States. However, the data indicates there are currently more pilots than jobs available. In fact, there are currently about 1.5 certificated pilots relative to demand, according to Federal Aviation Administration and Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

But there is a shortage of financial pathways and incentives for young people to pursue careers in aviation. One such financial pathway that can be greatly improved is the GI Bill for our veterans and their dependents.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill offers financial assistance towards flight training programs, but currently caps the maximum annual benefit much lower than other trade schools and falls well short of the maximum benefit that traditional higher learning private/public universities receive. Other non-college degree programs (specific training programs such as HVAC repair, truck driving, EMT, and beautician school) pay a maximum benefit capped at **\$26,381.37** per academic year. Currently, the VA caps flight training programs at only **\$15,075.05**.¹

Airline career-oriented flight training curriculums are typically expensive and more time-compressed, and thus do not fit neatly into the VA's academic yearly benefit cap as defined by the VA. Airline career-oriented curriculums can run in two phases. The first phase typically lasts 8-10 months and is designed to attain pilot certificates and ratings up to Certified Flight Instructor (CFI) and Multi Engine Land (MEL). The second phase can last anywhere from 16-18 months and allows newly certificated CFIs to build their experience level as flight instructors.

The Allied Pilots Association (APA) strongly urges Congress to pass a bill that allows Post-9/11 GI Bill recipients to attend a flight training program using the full maximum four-year benefit that the VA currently pays to private/public institutions of higher learning.

This would certainly provide a financial pathway and incentive for many veterans and their dependents to choose a career in aviation, alleviating a future pilot shortfall.

For questions or additional information please email GAC-Chairman@alliedpilots.org

¹ Veterans Affairs website, Effective August 1, 2022 to July 31, 2023 <https://www.va.gov/education/benefit-rates/post-9-11-gi-bill-rates/#how-much-of-the-full-benefit-r>