



## University of Maryland University College



As Presidents of some of our nation's most innovative public and private not-for-profit colleges and universities, we write to bring to your attention the plight of thousands of college students on active military duty that have suddenly received news that their Military Tuition Assistance (MTA) benefits have been eliminated entirely. The MTA benefit has not been reduced by a percentage called for in the sequestration; instead, the program ends immediately and until further notice. We ask your assistance in helping the Department of Defense (DoD) find the necessary means to restore this vital program.

We understand that as a result of Sequestration, the DoD has had to make very difficult decisions. However, the MTA program is not only one of the finest recruiting tools available to the services, it is enormously important to enlisted personnel morale. It is also a critical element in the training necessary to carry out our nation's most crucial missions. Collectively, our institutions have the privilege of educating a great many of the more than 325,000 active duty military students who enroll in over 800,000 classes each year, while defending our country. We have firsthand knowledge of the importance of this program to them and to their work.

Many recruits, just out of high school, enter the service with the understanding that the military will help provide them with a college education. Now, the services have eliminated that opportunity.

The best predictor of how well service members will fare in finding employment upon their return home is their level of education and professional training. The veteran unemployment rate already outpaces that of the general population. Eliminating the possibility of taking college classes or earning other academic credentials while in the military, condemns those who chose to serve their country to a rougher return to civilian life and the domestic job market. We believe that our servicemen and women deserve better.

We understand that some are trying to justify eliminating MTA by pointing out that active duty personnel can access their GI benefits as a substitute. That is not what they were promised upon entry to the military and the clock starts ticking on their limited GI benefits as soon as they are engaged. That means considerably fewer benefits will be available when service members return home. One is not a substitute for the other.

We also question the significance of the budget savings provided by eliminating the MTA. The long-term benefits of an educated military far out-weigh the short-term savings created by elimination.

We appreciate your leadership and support in working with the DoD to fix this misguided decision. We respectfully request your help in restoring the Military Tuition Assistance program to all the military services.

Sincerely,



Javier Miyares, President, University of Maryland University College



George A. Pruitt, President, Thomas Edison State College



Robert Mendenhall, President, Western Governors University



Ed Klonoski, President, Charter Oak State College



Meg Benke, Acting President, Empire State College



John Ebersole, President, Excelsior College



Jack Hawkins, Chancellor, Troy University