



# AUSA BACKGROUND BRIEF

## THE GI BILL-ARMY'S BEST RECRUITING TOOL

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The GI Bill and the Army College Fund are unquestionably the premier Army enlistment incentives. Together, they can be worth up to \$25,000 for college or vocational/technical school tuition. Their appeal is strongest within that segment of the American youth population the Army most wants to attract—those seeking to continue their education after high school.

AUSA was an early strong supporter of the legislation that finally established the new GI Bill in 1985. It provides up to \$10,800 college tuition assistance to qualified persons enlisting after 30 June 1985. The program also requires a contribution totaling \$1200 from each participant.

The Army College Fund, as an addition to the GI Bill, is not available to everyone enlisting in the Army. Eligibility is primarily limited to those who enlist in a combat arms skill for at least two years. It is also offered to a few "hard-to-fill" specialties, but usually for enlistments of three or more years. Maximum payments from each of the programs is illustrated below.

Enlistment	GI Bill	GI Bill Plus Army College Fund
2 Years	\$ 9,000	\$17,000
3 Years	10,800	22,800
4 Years	10,800	25,200

While the GI Bill has been a very successful program, some adjustments to the program are needed. AUSA has been urging Congress for over two years to make some program adjustments. Finally, this year, Congress approved several amendments to the GI Bill, the most significant of which were:

- A death benefit to be paid to survivors of service-member participants in the program who die on active duty. The benefit would equal the amount reduced from the participant's basic pay minus any amount of educational assistance he or she might have received. A similar benefit would be paid to participants who, while on active duty, incurs physical or mental disabilities that preclude school attendance.
- A limited benefit for a pre-existing medical condition. Any participant who is discharged from military service for a pre-existing medical condition would be entitled to one month of education assistance for each month of active duty served.
- A one-time 120-day enrollment window beginning December 1, 1988. This window would provide a second chance to participate in the GI Bill for those service-members who entered on active duty between 1 July 1985 and 30 June 1988, but declined to sign up for the program.
- A liberalization of the rules for participation by reservists. It would authorize education assistance to National Guard and Reserve participants who attend school on a less than-half-time basis.

There is no question but that the GI Bill is a popular program with America's youth. Since its implementation in 1985, more than 550 thousand active duty recruits have signed up for the program. Army participation presently stands at over 90 percent of incoming recruits. AUSA has supported this program in its various publications, in testimony before Congressional Committees and during personal visits by AUSA officials with a variety of Members of Congress in their Capital Hill Offices.

( Prepared by the Institute of Land Warfare with information current as of December 1988.)