

---

# Defense Report

AUSA



---

## **The GI Bill Education Incentives—Absolutely Essential to Army Recruiting**

The military services are in full agreement that one of the best incentives for attracting bright young people to sign up is the educational benefit provided by the new GI Bill. Unfortunately, the Office of Management and Budget and the Defense Department are aiming to pull the rug out from under armed forces recruiters by cancelling the new GI Bill.

Beginning in July 1985, Congress authorized the services to run a three-year test of the GI Bill to see how much it would help recruiting. Between July and December, 68 percent of the people who enlisted in the active Army elected to participate in this plan which, on completion of a typical three-year enlistment, would give a soldier \$10,800 to help finance college or technical training. During the first year of service the soldier contributes \$100 a month and the government sets aside \$200. After that the government contributes \$300 for each month of service.

Active Army high-quality enlistments increased nearly ten percent during the first six months of the program and high-quality enlistments in the Army Reserve were up a whopping 43 percent for the same period.

It is difficult to see the Administration's view in cancelling the GI Bill. To the active-duty soldier it means losing 44 percent (\$4,200) of the government education contribution and paying 125 percent (\$1,500) more for the privilege. Guard and Reserve soldiers lose 100 percent of the current education benefit.

The potential damage to the Army from this precipitous act has the Army leadership deeply concerned. The recruiting advertising effort has already been hurt since the Army cannot offer the GI Bill incentive if it is being lost and it cannot advertise its not-yet-legislated replacement. Such an on-again, off-again effort creates an image of indecisive leadership, vacillating recruiting offers and reduced credibility in the Armed Forces.

It is hoped that, Congress will overcome Administration opposition and support this highly effective program for attracting and keeping bright, motivated young men and women in the Army. If we fail to do this, at the very least we threaten the all volunteer concept, at worst the security of America.