

# SB-4

Create a civilian version of the historic GI Bill for high school graduates that relieves the cost of higher education, promotes generational pride in America, limits the cost of higher education and adds new benefits to the existing GI Bills.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE AMERICAN LEGION BOYS NATION

Mr. Scott of Illinois introduced the following bill;

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## A BILL

Create a civilian version of the historic GI Bill for high school graduates that relieves the cost of higher education, promotes generational pride in America, limits the cost of higher education and adds new benefits to the existing GI Bills.

*Be it enacted by The American Legion Boys Nation Senate assembled,*

### **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the "EDUCATE AMERICA ACT".

### **SECTION 2.**

Dangerous circumstances are affecting the United States today:

- There has been a steady decline in the percentage of the U.S. population that considers itself proud that they are citizens of the United States of America. This decline mostly affects our youngest generations.

- Less than half of Americans believe the United States has a unique character that makes it the greatest country in the world, down from 70% in 2012.

- A general malaise to the concept of American Exceptionalism is overtaking the young generation of U.S. Citizens.

Further, the higher education of our youngest generations is in peril due to the following:

- The cost of attending a four-year college or university in the United States has been rising more than twice as fast as inflation. The average cost of universities in the US rose by 497% between the 1985-86 and 2017-18 academic years. In 2022, costs at U.S. colleges and universities rose 5.2 percent, the highest rate since FY2001. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, prices for education are 267.5% higher in 2023 versus 1993.

- Today, there are 45 million student loan borrowers, who collectively owe \$1.7 trillion of student loans.

- New college students take on college loan debt at a rate of \$94 billion per year.

Therefore, the EDUCATE AMERICA ACT, aims to reduce the overall cost of higher education for the majority of newly matriculating college students, provide a method of paying for higher education, while at the same time give our youngest generation valuable real-world experience working in an environment that promotes America's unique ideals and values. This will be accomplished by:

- High School graduates within two years of their graduation or their 21 birthday, whichever comes first, may to go to work full-time for either a government agency or a not-for-profit organization and earn up to four years (8 semesters) of free college tuition at any public U.S. College, university or trade school at a rate of one (1) semester for every six months of employment.

- Each Federal agency shall designate a predetermined number of positions commensurate to the skill and knowledge of a typical high school graduate eligible to participate in this program.

- An annual list of approved not-for-profit organizations will be developed that are eligible for participation in this program. Not-for-profit organizations may apply for participation. Qualifying organizations shall serve the greater good of U.S. society, advance America's interests at home or

abroad, and promote American exceptionalism as a stated core value of the organization.

- Total cost associated with attending any college, university, trade school, or any other form of post-secondary educational institution that receives Federal funding, whether through direct appropriation, passed through state appropriation, grants or by any other means, shall not exceed the average annual salary at the five-year mark of graduates of that institution in the same major working in the same field or like field of employment.

- Colleges, universities, trade schools, or any other forms of post-secondary educational institutions that receives Federal funding, whether through direct appropriation, passed through state appropriation, grants or by any other means, shall disclose to all perspective students before enrollment the rate of employment of recent graduates employed in each major or field of study and working in that or a related field.

- Because this Act provides educational funding opportunities to the civilian population in much the same way the GI Bill benefits are provided to our brave men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces, it is necessary to recognize the higher-order and exceptional nature of military service. Therefore, improvements to the existing GI Bill is as follows: All forms of the GI Bill (Chapters 30/33/1606) shall be extended to 60 months of educational benefits and are immediately transferrable to depends upon satisfactory eligibility.