

**THE AMERICAN LEGION
DEPARTMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
HOLIDAY INN, MORGANTOWN-READING
MORGANTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA
APRIL 11-12, 2026**

Resolution No. 1169

Submitted by: WWI Memorial Post 109
District 19-C

WHEREAS, The American Legion has long championed the rights and welfare of America’s veterans, including the preservation and proper administration of educational benefits established under the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944 and its subsequent expansions; and

WHEREAS, The Post-9/11 GI Bill, enacted in 2008, and the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017—known as the “Forever GI Bill”—were intended to provide equitable, accessible opportunities for veterans to pursue higher education, employment training, and successful reintegration into civilian life; and

WHEREAS, Veterans discharged before January 1, 2013, remain subject to a 15-year expiration period for Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits, while those discharged on or after that date retain lifetime access under the Forever GI Bill, creating disparities among veterans with otherwise similar service histories; and

WHEREAS, The COVID-19 national emergency, beginning in March 2020 and officially terminated in April 2023, resulted in widespread closure or severe restriction of colleges, trade schools, licensing programs, and in-person training required by many career fields, thereby preventing thousands of veterans from using earned educational benefits; and

WHEREAS, Many veterans with pre-2020 benefit expiration dates lost eligibility during this emergency period through no fault of their own, as classes were canceled, program access was restricted, hands-on learning requirements could not be met, and technological or family-care challenges impeded participation; and

WHEREAS, Failing to adjust educational benefit timelines to account for the pandemic results in an unintended forfeiture of benefits that veterans earned through honorable service, undermining the spirit and intent of the GI Bill programs; and

WHEREAS, Restoring or extending these benefits would strengthen veterans’ economic stability, reduce risk factors associated with unemployment, homelessness, and suicide, and support family readiness and long-term national workforce development; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion Department of Pennsylvania Department Executive Committee, meeting in a regular meeting assembled at the Holiday Inn, Morgantown, PA, April 11-12, 2026, that The American Legion urge the United States Congress and

the Department of Veterans Affairs to enact legislative or regulatory action retroactively extending Post-9/11 GI Bill eligibility for any veteran whose benefits expired on or after 1 March 2020 due to the COVID-19 national emergency; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion support aligning expiration-based Post-9/11 GI Bill users with the protections afforded under the Forever GI Bill by granting an extension equal to the duration of the COVID-19 emergency period or by converting affected veterans to Forever GI Bill–style lifetime eligibility; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Department of Pennsylvania urge federal policymakers to ensure benefit reinstatement is automatic, administratively streamlined, and without cost to the veteran; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That this resolution be forwarded upon approval to the National Executive Committee of The American Legion for appropriate assignment to the Veterans Employment & Education Commission or other relevant national commission or committee.

APPROVED REJECTED REFERRED CONSOLIDATED FILED