

Please Read Before You Elect The New GI Bill

For those of you who currently qualify for chapter 30 benefits, you have a very important choice to make as it relates to choosing the new ch. 33 benefit. **It is my strong opinion that you read and understand the following scenario (primarily for those of you who have used the majority of your benefits and feel you will exhaust your benefits before completing school and have served active duty after 9/11):**

Scenario: You have 4 months of benefits remaining at the end of the winter semester but still have a year and a half of school remaining. You are thinking about not taking spring and summer courses or paying for them yourself to save your benefits so that you can switch to the new GI Bill.

The result if you don't take spring/summer classes and switch to ch. 33 in the fall.

1. You make the irrevocable decision to switch to the Ch. 33 benefits for the fall semester, you now have 4 months of ch. 33 benefits remaining.
2. The VA will pay you and the school your percentage of eligibility (50-100%) for the fall semester (4 months). At the end of the semester you will have exhausted all of your GI Bill eligibility.

The result if you take summer classes and exhaust your ch. 30 benefits.

1. You use your benefits for spring and summer leaving you with 0 months and 0 days of ch. 30 benefits (exhausted).
2. You served active duty for at least 90 days after 9/11 qualifying you for the ch.33 GI Bill (same as above) so you apply for the new benefit (**not switching from one to the other- this is the key difference-if you switch you are trading out your remaining months of chapter 30 for 33- here you are applying for a new benefit that you are eligible for**).
3. Because you qualify under the new benefit you can qualify for up to 12 more months of benefits under the new benefit.

This situation also applies to those of you who have already exhausted your ch. 30 GI Bill benefits and have qualifying active duty time after 9/11 you may be eligible for an additional 12 months.

Something to know:

1. Ch. 30 will pay out the remainder of a semester if your benefits end at anytime during that semester, the new Ch.33 will not. So lets say the above individual used his benefits spring and summer but still had a couple of days remaining when fall starts, he could continue to receive his ch. 30 benefits through the whole fall semester then apply for the new ch.33 for winter, since he used a total of 40 months of ch. 30 benefits he could be eligible for 8 months of ch. 33 benefits (the maximum months of benefits is 48 no matter what).

Note: This is how it is being interpreted at schools across the country, this does not make it law, we are still seeking clarity from the VA. This is why I am recommending that you don't rush to apply for your chapter 33 benefits; you could cost yourself a lot of MONEY! You can contact the VA at 1-888-442-4551 to get an answer based on your situation.

Law currently implies

"If the student exhausts entitlement (0 days remaining) under chapter 30 he/she may be eligible for an additional 12 months under chapter 33 provided they have qualifying service following September 10, 2001."