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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

*file
Veterans*

February 20, 1981

TO: Don Moran

FROM: Morton Blackwell *MB*

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They asked that I forward these materials to someone of influence at OMB. That's you.

*Morton - -
Thanks: I appreciate
your saying that
along.*

[Signature]

N
A
V
P
A

National Association of Veterans Program Administrators

RICHARD H. BARNES, PRESIDENT
c/o WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY
Box 105
WICHITA, KS 67208
PHONE (316) 689-3027

The National Association of Veterans Programs Administrators is a non-profit organization comprised of professional educators who administer veterans' programs on the campuses of 1,017 institutions of higher learning. Most of these programs are funded under the Veterans-Cost-of-Instruction Payments Program (VCIP) which is administered by the Department of Education.

The programs provide five legislatively mandated services: outreach, recruitment, counseling, special education, and maintenance of a full time Office of Veterans Affairs. These are the minimum services provided. The overwhelming majority provide services that far exceed the mandates of legislation. Services being provided are accessible to all students at each institution who are eligible to receive V. A. benefits. The number actually being served may be one and one-half times the number documented by VCIP program reports.

The National Association of Veterans Programs Administrators is providing the following information in support of veterans' initiatives and the continuance of the Veterans-Cost-of-Instruction Payments Program.

The VCIP program has never achieved full funding status since its inception in 1973, and except for one supplemental funding period, the program operated at a \$23 million funding level through 1978. In 1979, the funding was decreased to \$19 million; in 1980, to \$14.38 million, and was scheduled for \$12.03 million in 1981. That is a decrease over a

three year period of 49.4% of the program's funds. This amount far exceeds the Reagan Administration's requested cuts in federal programs. VCIP has reached a level of minimum funding at the \$12 million figure.

. Services through VCIP are being provided not only to the 371,000 veterans eligible to be counted for funding under this program, but also to those veterans who are training in a less than half-time status, graduate students, active duty military personnel, recipients of benefits for dependents of veterans (Chapter 35), and veterans who contributed to the Veterans Education Assistance Program (Chapter 32). The number of persons actually receiving services exceeds one half million. That reduces the cost per student to well below the \$40 per FTE eligible student institutions presently receive.

. At most VCIP institutions the offices have assumed the responsibility, as part of their services, for the certification of students to the Veterans Administration. The certification process being accomplished within these offices has resulted in more accurate and more efficient reporting procedures at the institutions. Overall, this saves the government money because there are fewer overpayments to veterans. This problem is discussed in the Report to the Congress (see report MWD - 76 - 109, Controller General of the U. S.). Implementation of many of the recommendations found in this report was carried out by the VCIP offices. The Veterans Administration can expect an increase in the overpayment problem once again if the VCIP Program is discontinued.

: Cancellation of the Veterans-Representative-on-Campus Program (VROC) by the Veterans Administration leaves only the VCIP Program on college campuses to assist both veterans and the Veterans Administration. Loss of both of these programs would once again leave institutions and veterans with limited access to resources. Congressional legislation and its resulting continued revisions in V. A. Regulations do not allow institutions simply to complete and submit paperwork to the Veterans Administration. Reporting requirements have more than tripled in

the past five years. Without the VCIP Program to assist and supplement the certification process, the institution must make a choice: either to no longer certify veterans or to do so in a manner and with resources are available which could delay notification to the Veterans Administration and/or payments to veterans. Overpayments could increase and veterans could be denied their educational benefits because of late payments and the complications of the certification system.

. Veterans Administration statistics indicate that as many as 4.5 million veterans are still eligible to use or to finish using their educational benefits. While these figures indicate that the rate of usage is near 60% for the Vietnam-era G. I. Bill, that figure is not representative of the number of veterans who have completed training. The number completing training would be substantially lower than 60% since this refers only to those who started using their G. I. Bill. The first major initiative aimed at Vietnam-era veterans and education was the VCIP Program. In seven years, the program has dramatically affected the number of veterans using their G. I. Bill. Veterans Administration statistics show a dramatic increase in G. I. Bill usage from the inception of VCIP through the delimiting date in 1976. VCIP has provided, and could continue to provide, veterans with access to higher education. While the Veterans Administration has improved its outreach efforts, its direction through the new Vet Centers is towards counseling of Vietnam veterans for such problems as delayed stress. It seems that the Veterans Administration itself is depending on VCIP to continue the other efforts in the area of education.

. The new proposed regulations for VCIP (Federal Register, December 30, 1980) include input from this Association and from VCIP institutions. These new measures were requested as money and time saving regulations for the program. Few other programs have asked for a reduction in the maximum award of nearly 50%, from \$135,000 to \$75,000, and for an increase in the amount that must be used in the operation of the program, from 75% to 90%. While other programs request increased awards, VCIP institutions have seen the need, with decreasing appropriations, to

maximize the awards of all participants in the program. The new regulations also streamline the administrative process of the program which could decrease administrative costs within the Department.

. The proposed rescission of the VCIP Program on June 30, 1981, does not allow institutions a sufficient amount of time in which to assume financial obligations for the program. To insure an orderly transition from federal funding to institutional funding, a provision not required of this program or many others, requires a period of time longer than five months. Institutions cannot be expected to replace federal funds on such short notice without prior notification. Orderly transition from federal to institutional funds should occur during the remaining years for which the program is authorized, FY 84-85. During this period the VCIP Program needs to have a stable level of funding of not less than the \$12 million level. This would allow the program to retain its professional people and for them to concentrate on accomplishing the mandates of the program effectively. The alternative that could be applied to this and other federal programs is a requirement that the institutions contribute a percentage towards the operation of the program and assume total funding by the last authorized year of federal funding. Those guarantees would be a part of the application and would carry on past the ending date of the program to insure continued existence of services.

. While the VCIP Program has been requested for rescission (\$12.038 million), other programs have received increases of \$12 million or more. Many of these programs receive larger awards each year while serving fewer students. These programs have not been scrutinized by the same guidelines that VCIP has when funding levels have been reduced, even though they supposedly provide similar services. The cost per student of many of these programs is ten times the cost per FTE veteran under VCIP. VCIP is serving over 500,000 students on over 1,000 campuses with a funding level of \$14 million. Other programs, such as TRIO, expend over ten times that amount of money, on fewer programs, and on a significantly lower student population.

VCIP has demonstrated its cost effectiveness each program year.

. The VCIP Program can continue to provide the necessary services to those veterans of the post Vietnam-era who now are seeking educational advisement and services. These new students, while not experiencing the major readjustment problems of Vietnam veterans, still require special services. The initiatives of the new G. I. Bill would require offices to assist these new veterans and to assist institutions in implementing the new phases of the G. I. Bill. Some of these are already having an impact on institutions with the 90% tuition assistance program for certain military personnel and the new experimental G. I. Bill for selected enlistees currently being tried by the Department of Defense. Many of the initial problems associated with the Vietnam G. I. Bill could be avoided with the assistance of existing VCIP Programs and staff familiar with the Veterans Administration certification process. Many of the overpayment problems and counseling problems could be overcome with a savings to the government.

The Veterans-Cost-of-Instruction Payments Program has not completed the major tasks assigned to it by legislation. Inconsistent funding and support have delayed the completion of services to Vietnam-era veterans. These problems could be eliminated with Department of Education support and stable funding through the end of the program authorization.

The National Association of Veterans Programs Administrators is also supportive of the following issues:

. Veterans Federal Coordinating Committee - NAVPA supports the continuation of this committee to explore and coordinate new and existing veterans initiatives.

. Office of Veterans Affairs - NAVPA supports the concept that each federal agency, in conjunction with the Coordinating Committee, have an Office of Veterans Affairs to coordinate the impact of its programs on veterans and to take initiatives on behalf of veterans.

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