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United States Senate

7 October, 2016

The Honorable Robert McDonald
Secretary
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue Northwest
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary McDonald:

I am writing regarding the plight of nearly 7,000 student veterans who were using their GI Bill benefits at ITT Technical Institute when it closed in September 2016. The ITT Tech closure impacted thousands of Hoosiers at multiple locations in Indiana.

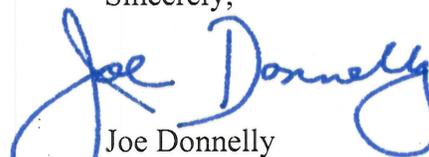
As you know, the Department of Education is working with civilian students who attended ITT Tech to discharge their student loans and refund Pell grants, allowing them to restart their education with a clean slate. Unfortunately, veterans are not receiving comparable relief on their GI Bill benefits through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

With ITT Tech's closure, student veterans are facing the loss of the VA housing allowance that helps them pay their bills while they pursue an education. Additionally, as it currently stands, veterans will lose all GI Bill benefits paid to ITT Tech. This lack of parity with civilian student aid relief is especially devastating in light of the uphill battle many veterans are facing in getting their ITT Tech credits transferred to a new college or university.

I understand that VA requires new statutory authority to fully address these problems. I am a cosponsor of the bipartisan *Veterans First Act* (S. 2921), which includes a provision that would enable VA to restore GI Bill benefits for veterans who were enrolled at ITT Tech at the time of its closure in September 2016. I request your confirmation that this interpretation of the bill is accurate and that if this or similar legislation is signed into law, you will act swiftly to provide much-needed relief to student veterans in Indiana and across the country.

No veteran should have to risk homelessness or lose the opportunity to obtain a college degree based on ITT Tech's closure. I sincerely hope that Congress will act to pass bipartisan legislation to address this crisis before the end of this year, and I ask that you do everything possible in the interim to assist student veterans through these trying times.

Sincerely,



Joe Donnelly
United States Senator