



2021 Advocacy Platform

Centurion Military Alliance is considered a premiere Transition Assistance Platform — force-multiplier for the Department of Defense/Transition Assistance Program – providing the most comprehensive military-to-civilian community-based transition assistance curriculum available for military service members and their families.

Among numerous studies, PEW Research [speaks](#) to the array of challenges encountered by transitioning veterans as they attempt to transition and readjust to civilian life.

While CMA applauds the monumental efforts initiated by the Transition to Veterans Program Office (TVPO), under the NDAA, CMA firmly believes more can be done for our nation’s transitioning service members and their families.

Built upon a foundation of holistic health, well-being and resiliency, CMA’s curriculum focuses on three interconnected transition pillars: Educational Attainment, Financial Literacy, and Vocational Proficiency and presents such in a highly interactive and engaging forum – designed to facilitate timely and accurate access to viable resources such that enhances the likelihood of each service-member’s successful transition.

CMA believes that Congress and the Biden Administration must play an integral role in several key ways:

#1. Improve the Transition Assistance Program (TAP)

- Improve Participation – Implement stricter guidelines and adherence policies DOD-wide to ensure all Active Duty, National Guard and Reserve personnel attend/complete TAP within mandated timelines.
- Expand Metrics and Measurements – Expand metrics and measurements beyond ‘TAP Participation Rates’ and ‘Career Readiness Standards’ to include rates of measurement such as: Timeliness of Participation (per regulatory guidelines) and Participation Rates related to Peripheral/Optional Classes.
- Mandate Universal Participation – No ‘Opt-Out’ Option – Remove the opt-out option (based on rank or other non-research-based policy determinants) and implement stricter guidelines mandating universal participation in courses such as Financial Literacy and/or Higher Education & Training (e.g., Degrees, Certifications, Licensure).
- Improve the DOD to VA Handoff – Strengthen relational connectedness between DOD and VA. Implement strict policy mandating each service-member enroll in VA (per eligibility determination) and mandate administrative DOD-to-VA handoff to strengthen the VA Solid Start Program and to ensure each service-member enrolls in VA prior to separation from service commitment.

#2. Don't Limit Veterans' College Options or Degrade Their Earned Benefits

- Some policymakers mischaracterize the 90/10 Rule as a “loophole” – it is not. Changing the current rule to include the GI Bill benefits into the 90/10 Rule would adversely affect our nation’s veterans in attaining their higher education goals:
 - First and foremost, to equate veterans’ earned benefits to students’ need-based benefits is a grave error. Our nation’s All-Volunteer Force has sworn an oath to stand in harm’s way and in doing so, have *earned* certain benefits – the GI Bill being chief among them. Any policymaker likening the GI Bill to Pell Grants or Stafford Loans only serves to degrade the value of the GI Bill and further opens the door to tinkering with DOD recruitment-driven incentives directed toward future prospective enlistments – adversely affecting our nation’s readiness.
 - Secondly, to limit any veteran’s educational choices further restricts her/his options to making informed decisions and choosing the institution that can best assist the veteran in attaining her/his higher education or vocational certification goals. Changing the 90/10 rule to factor in the GI Bill will adversely affect or even shutter many of the nation’s veteran-friendly career colleges or universities, since the ruling would no longer allow such colleges/universities to leverage the revenue that accompanies GI Bill benefits.

- Regardless of its tax designation, CMA contends that no college or university on the planet provides its educational or training services for free and further believes that an institution's IPEDS-measured results greatly outweigh anything as remotely insignificant as the institution's tax designation.
- CMA further believes the respective veteran is best-equipped to decide which school works best for her/him. Just as veterans have the freedom to invest VA home loans on the house that best suits their needs, such is true regarding the use of their education benefits.
- Adversaries of career colleges believe that veterans have been duped by *for-profit* institutions and while such adversaries site convenient bad actor examples, they overlook the fact that a considerable portion of the veteran population prefers the customer-focused, flexible schedules, accommodating online instruction, and military-friendly credit policies that are a hallmark of career colleges.
- Policymakers must not confuse their vision of higher education as defined and dominated by the lobbying of those who advocate solely for legacy institutions and further conflate such as adequately meeting the educational or vocational training needs of today's veterans.

#3. Expand TAP – Increase the Number and Quality of Post-Separation Contacts through Effective Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs)

- As good as the current DOD/TAP ecosystem is, it Can't Do It All – As well-intentioned as TAP is, it is still a contracted service that is extraneous to DOD's central mission and is disconnected from numerous viable VSOs nationwide. Scores of successful VSOs, non-profits, faith-based institutions and state/local government programs have been specifically designed to assist veterans in transition.
- Congress and the Biden Administration should enact policies that examine, align, and fund respective VSO programs that provide intrusive advising and intentionally facilitate access to community-based resources and support services in the respective town or city in which the transitioning veteran intends to reside.