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Congressman Mike Bost meets with Illinois Veterans about GI Bill Issues
*Active duty and former service-members earn educational benefits through
Honorable service, but some schools target Veterans with dishonorable practices*

O'FALLON, IL – U.S. Representative Mike Bost (R-IL) met recently with a group of Illinois military veterans who were targeted for fraud when they utilized their GI Bill educational benefits. From excessive fees to withholding transcripts to signing students up for loans they had not authorized, Illinois Veterans have faced numerous unethical practices by schools eager to cash in on their federal benefits.

Santiago Longoria enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in October 2001, less than one month after the terrorist attacks on 9/11. Following a combat deployment to Iraq, Santiago was Honorably discharged in 2005. He used his GI Bill educational benefits to earn an Associate's degree from Coleman University, which he then transferred to now-defunct **ITT Technical institute**, or so he thought. Despite being told his degree would transfer, Santiago eventually learned ITT Tech had lied, and none of his credits had actually been transferred. On three separate occasions, the school changed his program without explanation and added additional coursework. After 3 years at ITT Tech, Santiago somehow had yet to complete his Bachelor's degree, and his GI Bill benefits eventually ran out. On top of that, he paid nearly \$10,000 for overpayments received by the school. Today, Santiago remains chronically underemployed, without his GI Bill educational benefits, and stuck with ITT credits that no institution will accept.

Roger Loesch served for twenty years in the U.S. Air Force. During his enlistment, he used DoD Tuition Assistance to earn a Bachelor's degree from Arizona State University, and also an online Master's degree in Emergency Management from **Trident University**. After being Honorably discharged in 2012, he volunteered with the St. Louis-area Red Cross, but found it hard to locate a suitable job with his Trident degree. In addition, despite recruiting promises from Trident, the university offered no post-graduation employment assistance. Roger was thus forced to reenroll and obtain another Master's degree with his GI Bill educational benefits from Webster University. He is now employed with the USDA in Saint Louis.

“We are grateful to Congressman Mike Bost for meeting today with these defrauded veterans and offering his assistance,” said Tyson Manker, Veterans Advocate at [Veterans Education Success](#), which provides free assistance to veterans who were deceived or defrauded by a college. “Too many colleges see veterans as nothing more than dollar signs in uniform. America’s heroes should be treated with honor and respect when they become college students, not targets for consumer fraud.”

“Our nation’s greatest asset is our people, and our veterans are the best of the best,” said [Rep. Bost](#). “It’s infuriating to hear stories of our nation’s heroes being used as nothing more than ‘cash cows’ by some unethical education institutions. I have—and will continue—to support policies that crack down on these practices. Moving forward, I will ensure legislation like the Forever GI Bill is implemented properly so our veterans can move from the world’s greatest fighting force to the world’s greatest workforce with education benefits they can use immediately.”

Lawmakers in Congress have taken action to restore benefits to some student veterans who, through no fault of their own, were targeted with fraudulent and deceptive practices by unethical colleges and schools. For example, H.R. 3218 the ‘Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017’ was recently signed into law, and will provide relief to veterans who attended now-defunct colleges. Representative Bost is an original co-sponsor of this legislation, the full text of which you can read [here](#).

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