

# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF VETERANS' PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES – 2026



## WHO WE ARE

The National Association of Veterans' Program Administrators (NAVPA) represents the professionals on college campuses who administer veterans' education benefits and serve as the bridge between federal policy and the students and families who rely on those benefits every day. Our members work at the intersection of VA education systems and federal policy, institutional compliance and student support, and the lived experience of veterans and military-connected learners. In this role, they see firsthand how legislative intent translates into operational reality. In 2025, NAVPA had 387 member institutions and served approximately 320,000 students using VA education benefits, based on information from the GI Bill® Comparison Tool.

NAVPA member institutions received over \$1.25 billion in Post-9/11 tuition and fee payments in the most recent reporting period. These figures reflect only a portion of total VA education benefit utilization and do not include additional programs such as Dependents' Educational Assistance or Veteran Readiness and Employment.

## OUR 2026 ADVOCACY FOCUS

In 2026, NAVPA's federal advocacy is centered on three core pillars: protecting veterans from administrative and financial harm, strengthening the delivery infrastructure of veterans' education benefits, and ensuring transparency, fairness, and accountability across the system. These pillars reflect the realities our members encounter every day. Students are facing financial uncertainty due to administrative failures, institutions are struggling to maintain service continuity during federal disruptions, and systems that too often lack clear lines of responsibility when change does not go as planned.

## LEGISLATIVE ALIGNMENT

Many of NAVPA's long-standing priorities align with bipartisan legislation currently before Congress, including **H.R. 1458, the Veterans Education and Technical Skills Opportunity Act of 2025**. This legislation reflects several of the operational and policy challenges identified by professionals in the field, particularly around student protections, institutional compliance, and system accountability. NAVPA supports advancement of this bill where its provisions directly advance the priorities outlined in this agenda.

# LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

## 1 | STUDENT DEBT AND FINANCIAL HARM CAUSED BY ADMINISTRATIVE FAILURES

### THE PROBLEM

Students using VA education benefits continue to face delayed payments, overpayments, and unexpected debt due to administrative errors and system breakdowns. These failures, magnified during the 2025 government shutdown, create financial instability that threatens students' ability to remain enrolled.

### NAVPA'S FOCUS

NAVPA is advocating for protections that keep students from being penalized for federal processing errors, including limits on recoupment, clear responsibility for overpayments, and predictable payment timelines supported by transparent communication.

## 3 | UNREALISTIC COMPLIANCE TIMELINES AND ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN

### THE PROBLEM

Institutions face increasingly complex compliance requirements that outpace operational capacity, diverting staff from direct student support and increasing the risk of technical noncompliance, pressures that intensify during federal disruptions.

### NAVPA'S FOCUS

NAVPA is advocating for compliance frameworks that maintain strong oversight while reflecting operational reality, including realistic timelines, flexible implementation standards, and continuity planning that protects essential student services.

## 5 | GI BILL® COMPLAINT AND FEEDBACK SYSTEMS

### THE PROBLEM

Unvetted or misdirected complaints are publicly posted and used to trigger compliance action, often based on VA errors or misunderstandings, creating reputational harm and regulatory burden without due process for institutions.

### NAVPA'S FOCUS

NAVPA supports reforming complaint and feedback systems to ensure verification before publication, meaningful institutional response, clear distinction between student feedback and enforcement triggers, and fairness in how complaints are retained and used.

## 6 | ACCOUNTABILITY IN SYSTEM CHANGES AND POLICY UPDATES

### THE PROBLEM

Major system and policy changes affecting veterans' education benefits are frequently implemented without sufficient notice, coordination, or ownership. When failures occur, students and institutions absorb the consequences.

### NAVPA'S FOCUS

NAVPA is advocating for formal change-management standards that require advance notice, coordinated communication, clear accountability, and incident-response protocols, so governance failures do not become student or institutional crises.

## 2 | FEDERAL POLICY MISALIGNMENT FOR STUDENTS ACTIVATED DURING ENROLLMENT

### THE PROBLEM

When servicemembers are activated during a term, federal policy often results in benefit loss, forced refunds, and academic disruption, while steering institutions toward the use of "Incomplete" grades regardless of faculty judgment or student preference.

### NAVPA'S FOCUS

NAVPA is working to preserve student choice and academic autonomy by making "Incomplete" grades an option, not a mandate, and protecting entitlement when service interrupts education, and aligning VA, DOD, and Department of Education policies to eliminate contradictory requirements.

## 4 | CAPACITY AND ROLE CLARITY FOR VA EDUCATION SUPPORT STAFF

### THE PROBLEM

Furloughs during the government shutdown exposed systemic weaknesses in the continuity of Education Call Centers, the SCO Hotline, and VR&E counseling, leaving students and schools without guidance when confusion and delays were greatest.

### NAVPA'S FOCUS

NAVPA is advocating for student-facing education support functions to be treated as mission-critical services, with continuity-of-operations requirements, surge capacity, and staffing models that ensure reliable access to guidance, especially during emergencies.