

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 2, 2024

The Honorable Christine E. Wormuth
Secretary of the Army
1600 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Wormuth,

We write today with deep concern about the potential funding cuts for the Army's Credentialing Assistance Program. These cuts, as reported by Military.com, could have a significant impact on 100,000 soldiers.¹ However, it's our enlisted troops who could bear the brunt, as they are the ones who most benefit from this program. This essential program for recruiting, retention and professional development must be maintained.

In 2020, the Army's Credentialing Assistance Program was introduced across the force, providing soldiers with \$4,000 a year to invest in civilian credentials. These credentials, spanning fields such as cybersecurity, coding, commercial driving, and many others, not only enhance their current job proficiency but also open doors to civilian employment upon transition from the military.

It is of utmost importance to recognize that all our military services are currently grappling with meeting recruiting goals. The Army's potential reduction of education benefits poses a significant threat to professional development and overall military readiness. Providing our servicemembers with access to education is a crucial factor in maintaining a skilled and diverse force. Any funding cuts to this program could potentially exacerbate the already strained retention and recruiting numbers, a situation we cannot afford to ignore.

According to the Department of Defense's own research, paying for future education is not just one of the main reasons why servicemembers join the military, but also a key factor in their decision to continue serving. By providing education benefits, we are not just attracting new recruits, but also ensuring their long-term commitment to the organization.² This is not the time to dismantle critical recruiting tools and servicemember benefits. The Army's credentialing program provides soldiers with access to civilian credentials of their choice, making them more marketable to future employers as they make the transition out of the Army. This personal benefit is invaluable and should not be underestimated.

Approximately 64,000 soldiers have used the credentialing assistance program over the last four years. Implementing cuts to the program would undercut the Army's commitment to fostering personnel growth, development, and morale. It will also lead to fewer affordable college options.

¹[Army's Premier Education Benefits May Be on Chopping Block, with Tuition Assistance Cuts Being Considered, Too | Military.com](#)

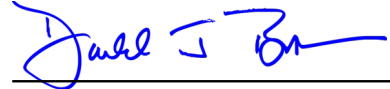
²https://jamrs.defense.gov/Portals/20/Documents/YP54Fall2022PUBLICRELEASEPropensityUpdate_20230713_v1.pdf

We must remain committed to providing servicemembers with tools that will improve and maintain their quality of life while they serve and after transitioning out. It is the right thing to do.

Sincerely,



Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress



Don Bacon
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



David J. Trone
Member of Congress