



**WORKFORCE
DATA QUALITY
CAMPAIGN**

1730 Rhode Island Avenue NW, Ste. 712
Washington DC 20036

P. 202.223.8355
E. info@WorkforceDQC.org

February 2, 2017

Re: Support for SB17-118

Dear Members of the Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee:

Workforce Data Quality Campaign (WDQC), a project of the National Skills Coalition, is a nonprofit initiative that promotes policies to provide stakeholders -- such as students, employers, educators, and policymakers -- with actionable and privacy-protected information to assess our nation's education and workforce strategies. We write today to urge you to support SB17-118, which would expand data collection from private occupational schools in order to provide prospective students (including many veterans receiving Post-9/11 G.I. bill funds) with the information they need to make informed decisions.

The Post-9/11 G.I. bill is a federally-funded initiative that provides money to help veterans cover the costs of education and training programs so they may find successful civilian careers. Many veterans use this funding to attend private occupational schools, also called for-profit institutions, with weak student outcomes. According to a 2012 report by the U.S. Senate's Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, "during the first two years of availability of post-9/11 G.I. bill benefits, for-profit companies collected \$1.6 billion, or 37 percent, of the program's total \$4.3 billion in benefits."¹ The for-profit institutions receiving the most Post-9/11 G.I. bill funding reported high student withdrawal rates of 44 to 66 percent for AA and BA programs.² Furthermore, a subsequent analysis suggests that many students at these for-profit institutions struggle to find employment that pays well enough to allow them to pay back their debt.³

By providing information about what jobs will be in-demand, and how past graduates of education and training programs have fared, this bill would help ensure that veterans, and *all* potential students in Colorado, have the information they need to select an institution that will serve them well. The bill also would help ensure taxpayer money is used wisely, by helping veterans spend their benefits at institutions that successfully move them into careers.

Although the benefits of this bill are great, its burden on private occupational schools is not exceptional. Colorado's public institutions, as well as institutions seeking inclusion on the state's Eligible Training Provider List (which is used to determine eligibility for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funding), already submit similar data to the state. By requiring private occupational schools to do so as well, the state would

¹ U.S. Senate, Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, *For Profit Higher Education: The Failure to Safeguard the Federal Investment and Ensure Student Success*, p. 27, July 30, 2012, last accessed Feb 1, 2017, http://www.help.senate.gov/imo/media/for_profit_report/PartI.pdf.

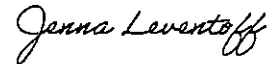
² *Ibid* at 29.

³ U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, *Two Years After Harkin Report Revealed Questionable Business Practices in For-Profit College Industry, New Analysis Shows For-Profit Colleges are Top Recipients of Post 9/11 G.I. Bill Dollars*, July 30, 2014, <http://www.help.senate.gov/ranking/newsroom/press/two-years-after-harkin-report-revealed-questionable-business-practices-in-for-profit-college-industry-new-analysis-shows-for-profit-colleges-are-top-recipients-of-post-9/11-gi-bill-dollars>.

have comparable information on more of its institutions. Once made available online through the bill's proposed Postsecondary Education and Training Program Comparative Tool, students would have a one-stop shop to find information about all of their education and training options. Enacting legislation to provide students with better information will ultimately help Colorado protect its veterans and develop its skilled workforce for a competitive economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Jenna Leventoff
Workforce Data Quality Campaign