

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 10, 2016

The Honorable Robert McDonald  
Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, Northwest  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary McDonald:

We write to bring your immediate attention to recent actions taken by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the Department of Education (ED) against the DeVry Education Group, Inc., a for-profit higher education organization. These alarming allegations should be broadly publicized to Post-9/11 GI Bill beneficiaries and we urge the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to exhaust its existing legal authority to protect veterans and their families from all predatory for-profit universities that employ duplicitous marketing and false advertising during recruitment.

In 2008, DeVry launched the *We Major in Careers* campaign, which is cited as a “career-focused brand marketing campaign” that touts DeVry’s purported success in helping graduates secure careers in their field of study. However, when the Department of Education asked DeVry to provide graduate-specific data to corroborate these marketing representations, DeVry was unable to procure these records. On January 27, 2016, the FTC filed suit against the operators of DeVry University due to its inability to validate the veracity of these recruitment claims and for knowingly misleading potential students through false statements and advertisements. Most alarmingly, the complaint cited that DeVry has not substantiated the assertions that since 1975, 90 percent of its graduates seeking employment had obtained a career in their fields of study within six months, and that DeVry graduates earned 15 percent higher incomes than other college or university graduates just one year after graduation. The complaint additionally cited intentional, incorrect calculations of the number of graduates working in their field of study post-graduation. Based on this lawsuit, the Department of Education separately informed DeVry of its decision to limit DeVry’s participation in Title IV programs of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

We are especially concerned about the veterans and their families currently using, or planning to use, Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits at DeVry educational programs. DeVry University proudly claims a history of education current and former servicemembers, yet the FTC complaint specifically states that DeVry University’s website “also has included webpages that appeared in at least 2015 that were directed at current and former members of the armed services” using the same allegedly false employment statistics.<sup>1</sup> These allegations demonstrate clear, targeted marketing to military families and unscrupulous recruiting practices.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ftc.gov/system/files/documents/cases/160127devrycmpt.pdf>

We are pleased that VA added a caution flag to DeVry University on the GI Bill Comparison Tool. We encourage VA to send a letter to all Post-9/11 GI Bill beneficiaries currently enrolled at a DeVry-operated educational program to inform them of these alarming allegations and actions taken by other federal agencies and additionally work with ED and the FTC to investigate the benefit use, and employment status, of Post-9/11 GI Bill beneficiaries at DeVry University. We appreciate your immediate attention to this issue and ask for your continued cooperation in ensuring that federal laws and rules regarding deceptive recruiting tactics are appropriately enforced to ensure that veterans and their families do not fall prey to predatory for-profit schools. The Post-9/11 GI Bill must be used at high quality institutions, and all beneficiaries must be informed of these enforcement actions so that they do not waste VA education benefits at predatory institutions masquerading as higher education.

Sincerely,

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Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator

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Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



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Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator