The Early History of the GI Bill

Over the course of his career as a medical director and veterans’ advocate, Ron Porzio has worked with a wide range of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers across the United States. Ronald Porzio currently serves as the president of Porzio Consulting, where he advocates for veterans and members of the active military. Of all the veteran support legislation enacted over the past century, perhaps no measure has received more attention than the GI Bill.

Formally referred to as the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944, the GI Bill initially set out to prepare soldiers returning from World War II for reintegration into the surging American economy. While the bill received widespread support for its home loan and education benefits, it almost stalled in both chambers of Congress due to its provisions for unemployment. As a result, universities across the country experienced a sharp increase in applications, with veterans making up nearly 50 percent of all new admissions. In the same vein, the Department of Veterans Affairs provided financial support for more than two million home loans.