



**COLORADO**  
 Colorado Commission on  
 Higher Education  
 Department of Higher Education

Chair, Richard Kaufman  
 Vice Chair, Patricia L. Pacey  
 John Anderson  
 Luis Colon  
 Jeanette Garcia  
 Venecia Kerr  
 Monte Moses  
 C. Hereford Percy  
 Regina Rodriguez  
 Paula Sandoval  
 BJ Scott

## SUPPORT HB 15-1294

CDHE urges your **SUPPORT** for HB 15-1294, a bipartisan bill to align Colorado statutes with Federal law, as required by recent amendments to Section 702 of the Federal Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Choice Act).

The Choice Act was updated in December 2014, **expanding eligibility for in-state tuition** under the Post-9/11 and Montgomery GI Bill. States and institutions **MUST comply** with this new federal legislation **by July 1, 2015** or **risk disqualification from federal Post-9/11 GI Bill and Montgomery GI Bill financial aid programs** - a **potential loss of over \$55 million statewide**.

### What Does HB 15-1294 Do?

HB 15-1294 makes minor amendments to Colorado Revised Statutes to align with the definition of “covered individuals” under Section 702. Passage of this bill allows institutions to appropriately adjust their tuition classification policies to comply. This approach was specifically taken to ensure any future expansion of “covered individual” on the Federal level would not require additional legislation to align.

### What If Colorado Does Not Pass This Legislation?

If legislation is not passed to align state statute with federal law, institutions will be in jeopardy of losing federal Post-9/11 GI Bill and Montgomery GI Bill financial aid funding - **the loss is estimated at greater than \$55m statewide**.

*Since GI benefits pay for the cost of living, there is an economic impact in communities as well.* The exact amount is indeterminate, but losing out on GI benefits would have significant impacts on areas such as Colorado Springs.

While the fiscal for this bill will indicate a decrease in tuition revenues as a result of this bill of roughly \$1.6 million, this is inconsequential compared to the loss of federal GI benefit tuition assistance dollars should this legislation not pass.

### What Is Included In The Federal Update?

Under Federal law, “covered individuals” eligible for in-state tuition under Section 702 now include the following individuals living in the state in which the institution of higher learning is located, regardless of his/her formal state of residence:

- A **Veteran** who enrolls in the school within three years of discharge from a period of active duty service of 90 days or more.
- A **spouse or child using transferred benefits** who enrolls in the school within three years of the transferor’s discharge from a period of active duty service of 90 days or more.
- A **spouse or child using benefits under the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship** who enrolls in the school within three years of Service member’s death in the line of duty following a period of active duty service of 90 days or more.

