



THE COUNCIL
OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK
CITY HALL
NEW YORK, NY 10007

MELISSA MARK-VIVERITO
SPEAKER

TELEPHONE
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May 2, 2016

Hon. Paul Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
1233 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
317 Russell Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Ryan and Majority Leader McConnell:

We are writing to oppose H.R. 3016 and any other legislative action that would reduce the benefits owed to post-9/11 veterans and their families.

On February 9, 2016, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 3016, entitled the "Veterans, Employment, Education and Healthcare Improvement Act." Unfortunately, H.R. 3016 includes a 50 percent cut in the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) stipend provided to children who will have their parent's post-9/11 GI Bill benefits transferred to them. This stipend is a vital part of the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008. Cutting it in any way would go against our nation's solemn duty to provide assistance to our veterans upon the completion of their service.

This past week, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee stood with new veterans by not including these cuts to the Post-9/11 GI Bill in their version of the bill, entitled the "Veterans First Act". We must now ensure that the House removes their cuts as well.

New York City is home to more than 200,000 veterans, including more than 22,000 post-9/11 veterans. The New York City Council has been working closely with our city's Department of Veterans' Services to help ensure that these veterans are receiving all of the quality services that they and their families are entitled to. We have also been working hard to end veteran homelessness. Unfortunately, the cuts in the BAH stipend that H.R. 3016 seeks to impose will make it much more difficult to meet our moral obligation to prevent homelessness among the families of veterans. In fact, the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America estimates that these cuts will result in a monthly reduction of \$1,818 in benefits for the children of New York City's veterans.

Approximately 2.8 million men and women have served in our armed services post-9/11. To permit cuts to their benefits sets a dangerous precedent. Many of these veterans served in harm's way in the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq and in other dangerous areas. We owe it to these veterans to provide them with the same opportunities and benefits that our country afforded the veterans of World War II and other generations of service members.

As representatives tasked with protecting and assisting our city's veterans, we ask that you oppose H.R. 3016 and any other bill that attempts to reduce benefits to our post-9/11 veterans. We also respectfully ask that you work to ensure that our nation keeps its solemn duty to the brave men and women who have served the branches of our military and to provide them with all of the benefits that they so richly deserve.

Sincerely,



Melissa Mark-Viverito
Speaker



Eric A. Ulrich
Chair, Committee on
Veterans



Karen Koslowitz
Chair, Committee on State
& Federal Legislation



Jimmy Van Bramer
Majority Leader



Ritchie Torres
Council Member



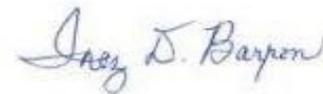
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Donovan Richards
Council Member



Daniel Dromm
Council Member



Inez D. Barron
Council Member



Margaret Chin
Council Member



Chaim M. Deutsch
Council Member



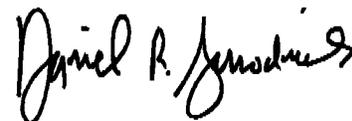
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Rosie Mendez
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Deborah Rose
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Ben Kallos
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Helen Rosenthal
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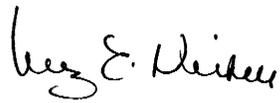
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James Vacca
Council Member



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Elizabeth Crowley
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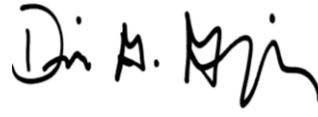
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