

ASSOCIATION of
JESUIT COLLEGES
& UNIVERSITIES
AJCU

June 27, 2022

Senator Jon Tester
Chairman
Senate Veterans Affairs Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Jerry Moran
Ranking Member
Senate Veterans Affairs Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Tester and Ranking Member Moran:

On behalf of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities' (AJCU) 27 U.S. member institutions, I would like to express my support for S 4458, a bill "to improve the process by which the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines whether an educational institution meets requirements relating to the percentage of students who receive educational assistance furnished by the Secretary."

AJCU is proud to serve student veterans at our institutions of higher education. Our colleges and universities are deeply committed to offering strong academic and support services to our nation's student veterans and our campus communities are dedicated to veteran student success in post-secondary study. All 27 of our U.S. schools participate in the Yellow Ribbon program as a way of making a Jesuit higher education accessible and affordable to this particular population of students.

For student veterans, the 85/15 rule serves as an important safeguard, protecting these students, and their educational benefits, from predatory fraud and abuse. But for colleges and universities with very small student veteran populations, (like AJCU institutions which have an average to 2.7% student veteran enrollment) the VA's current policies have added a layer of confusion and bureaucracy, imposing negative consequences for student veterans by limiting the programs for which they are eligible to enroll. Among our schools, there are several examples of programs deemed ineligible to enroll student veterans even though no student veterans are currently enrolled in those programs.

This legislation is sorely needed. Congressional intent has been clear, but this legislation will leave no question that institutions of higher education with a student veteran population of less than 35 percent (among other criteria) should not be subject to calculating or complying with the 85/15 rule. Legislative safeguards included in the Higher Education Act, coupled

BOSTON COLLEGE, MA
CANISIUS COLLEGE, NY
COLLEGE OF THE HOLY CROSS, MA
CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY, NE
FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY, CT
FORDHAM UNIVERSITY, NY
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY, DC
GONZAGA UNIVERSITY, WA
JOHN CARROLL UNIVERSITY, OH
LE MOYNE COLLEGE, NY
LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY, CA
LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO, IL
LOYOLA UNIVERSITY MARYLAND, MD
LOYOLA UNIVERSITY NEW ORLEANS, LA
MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY, WI
REGIS UNIVERSITY, CO
ROCKHURST UNIVERSITY, MO
SAINT JOSEPH'S UNIVERSITY, PA
SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY, MO
SAINT PETER'S UNIVERSITY, NJ
SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY, CA
SEATTLE UNIVERSITY, WA
SPRING HILL COLLEGE, AL
UNIVERSITY OF DETROIT MERCY, MI
UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO, CA
UNIVERSITY OF SCRANTON, PA
XAVIER UNIVERSITY, OH

with the thoughtful provisions included in S. 4458, give us confidence that student veterans and their benefits will be protected from abuse while ensuring these students are able to use their earned benefits to pursue academic pathways that fit their needs and advance their long-term career goals.

We appreciate your leadership on this issue and other issues of significant importance to higher education. If you have any questions or need additional information from our institutions, please contact Jenny Smulson, our Vice President for Government Relations, at jmulson@ajcunet.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael J. Garanzini S.J." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rev. Michael J. Garanzini, S.J.
President
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities