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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Moody Asks Student Loan Forgiveness for Disabled Vets

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody is asking the U.S. Department of Education to forgive the student loans of veterans who became totally and permanently disabled while serving in the United States Military. The request is part of an effort by a coalition of 51 attorneys general to offer financial relief to military members injured while serving our country.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “As we honor our fallen military heroes this Memorial Day weekend, let us not forget the brave men and women permanently disabled while serving our country. I am calling on the U.S. Department of Education to discharge the student loans of these courageous Americans, and to set up a system to automatically discharge any future student loans held by military members permanently disabled while serving our great nation.”

Last year, DOE identified more than 42,000 veterans eligible for student loan relief due to a service-related disability. Fewer than 9,000 of those veterans applied to have loans discharged as of April 2018. The coalition of attorneys general today sent a letter requesting that DOE discharge any remaining outstanding loans and develop a process to automatically discharge the student loans of veterans determined by the Department of Veterans Affairs to be eligible for such relief. The attorneys general are also requesting that DOE halt debt collection efforts targeting disabled veterans, and clear credit reports of any negative reporting related to student loans.

To view the letter, click here.

Under federal law, DOE is required to discharge the federal student loans of veterans determined by DVA to be totally and permanently disabled due to service-connected conditions. Although DOE currently requires disabled veterans to take affirmative steps to apply for loan discharges, those steps are not required by law.

The attorneys general note that the federal government has taken some steps to make it easier for eligible veterans to secure student loan relief. According to the letter, however, an automatic discharge process that gives individual veterans an opportunity to opt out for personal reasons would eliminate unnecessary paperwork burdens and ensure that all eligible disabled veterans can receive a discharge.

Proposals for automatic discharges with opt-out rights have bipartisan support in Congress and among leading veterans’ advocacy organizations. The veterans' groups supporting such proposals include: High Ground Advocacy, Ivy League Veterans Council, The Retired Enlisted Association, Veterans Education Success and Vietnam Veterans for America.