

February 1, 2010

Rep. Carol Shea-Porter
412 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: 202-225-4476

RE: Transferability of Post-9/11 GI Bill Benefits for United States Public Health Service (USPHS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Officers.

Dear Congresswoman Shea-Porter,

I am on Active Duty in the USPHS, and am stationed in Baltimore, Maryland. I am a constituent of yours and vote and pay taxes in New Hampshire, which is my home of record. I am writing to ask your support to extend the Post-9/11 GI Bill transferability to USPHS and NOAA officers. Personally, my two daughters would benefit from transferability and I am writing on behalf of my children all those of other PHS Officers, many of whom have also served in the Military. I am writing because Transferability is the right thing to do.

I am asking for your co-sponsorship of H.R. 3657, to provide USPHS and NOAA Commissioned Officers with transferability of Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits. The USPHS and NOAA have always been included in previous Montgomery GI Bill benefits, including transferability. I believe the omission of USPHS and NOAA officers from the provision of transferability was an oversight, the correction of which will be crucial for recruitment and retention in our respective Corps'.

Currently, I am assigned to the United States Food and Drug Administration as a Supervisory Consumer Safety Officer. I have many duties at the USFDA and in addition, as a USPHS Officer, I have deployed to Texas in September and October of 2008 to support the relief efforts in response to Hurricane Ike.

Since the Commissioned Corps was established in 1889, USPHS Officers have served in every major armed conflict. The USPHS currently has Officers serving alongside our Military in Iraq and Afghanistan. Similarly, NOAA Corps officers commonly serve in austere and hazardous conditions.

Under their interpretation of the law, the VA ruled on March 31, 2009, that USPHS and NOAA officers are entitled to all Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits but one – the benefit known as “transferability,” which permits active duty Officers to transfer their unused educational benefits to their children. USPHS officers are all degreed professionals (e.g. doctors, dentists, engineers), who often do not use GI Bill benefits. As such, transferability benefits would serve as a recruitment and retention tool. The USPHS has significant needs, especially for clinical providers in underserved populations and the Transferability of GI Bill benefits would be a great tool to meet its workforce requirements.

A bill that would fix this one remaining problem has been introduced by Congressman
Ciro Rodriguez of Texas. His bill, H.R. 3657, would modify the statutory language to
extend transferability to USPHS and NOAA officers. This is why H.R. 3657 is important
to active-duty USPHS officers who live in your NH district and throughout the country. I
respectfully ask you to co-sponsor H.R. 3657. Thank you for your consideration.

I send this letter to you as a private citizen using my own time and resources. A response
from you regarding this letter is welcome and would be appreciated. My home address is:
223 Marley St. New Market, MD 21774 Phone-603-303-8114.

Sincerely,

Martin J. Guardia, MPH
Lieutenant, USPHS