GI Bill Sentiment Analysis
COVID-19’s Impact on GI Bill Conversations

As COVID-19 changes the way the world lives, works, and learns, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs sought to understand the most pressing issues for GI Bill® stakeholders. Using leading social listening technology, this research analyzes 100K+ posts from 70K+ authors on public facing digital and social media platforms with open text API. Data aggregated reflects current social sentiment from June-September 2020 compared to data from the same period last year to establish an adequate benchmark.

What We Heard
In the wake of COVID-19, conversations in the military-connected community saw a:

- **20%** increase in Higher Education mentions
- **4%** increase in Education and Job Training mentions
- **x28** increase in volume of deferment mentions

Who We Heard From
Branches of service from authors align to the distribution of military population, signaling proportionate representation in online conversations.

Top Discussion Areas
While concerns of health and safety have increased, **62%** of the conversation trends towards futureproofing careers and using the GI Bill to gain a competitive advantage in the job market.

Education & Job Training
People are discussing their education more than past years.

- Deferment of classes mentions are up **x28**.
- Staying in school is mentioned **4x** more than deferring.
7.7% of education mentions raised concerns around shift to remote learning due to:

» Confusion about how remote learning impacts GI Bill benefits
» Overall preference for in-person classes over online classes
» Disparity in benefits for online vs. in-person classes

While mentions of the GI Bill remained relatively flat, Higher Ed discussions increased 20%.

Decrease in GI Bill post volume, 2019-20
Increase in Higher Ed post volume, 2019-20

Conversations about Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) are up 23%

Non-college degree 7%
Institute of higher-learning 93%

VET TEC is mentioned in 61% of NCD discussions.

Why are online rates half the national average?
Will my allowances remain the same or decrease if classes switch to online?
Why aren’t online and resident rates the same?
Health & Safety
COVID-19 outbreaks spark health and safety discussions.

3% Of all conversations discuss health and safety of in-person learning.
91% Of these conversations expressed concerns relating to COVID-19.

Employment & Job Market
Stakeholders feel a sense of contributing to economic and personal growth.

86% of conversations are about reskilling and preparing for future jobs.
60% increase in conversations citing unemployment as a reason to use the GI Bill.

ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF THE GI BILL
Conversations recognize the GI Bill’s historic role in boosting the middle class.

“Many credit the GI Bill with helping to rebuild the country and the economy”

Futureproofing Careers
This research offers a pathway to help futureproof careers. By providing statistical significance to anecdotes, it identifies the needs and priorities of GI Bill students in a way that can inform policies and communications going forward, improving both GI Bill experience and outcomes.

Reskilling in technology is critical to remaining competitive in today’s job market.

Two new GI Bill programs help with futureproofing careers.

VETERAN EMPLOYMENT THROUGH TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION COURSES (VET TEC)
Pairs Veterans with industry-leading training providers to boost technical skills like coding and cloud computing.

EDITH NOURSE ROGERS STEM SCHOLARSHIP
Provides additional GI Bill benefits toward undergraduate science technology engineering and math (STEM) degrees.

Stay in Touch
Website: www.VA.gov/education
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