

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:

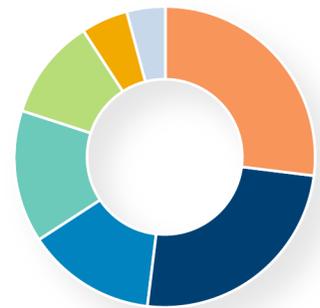


- 20%** increase in Higher Education mentions
- 4%** increase in Education and Job Training mentions
- x28** increase in volume of deferment mentions

Who We Heard From

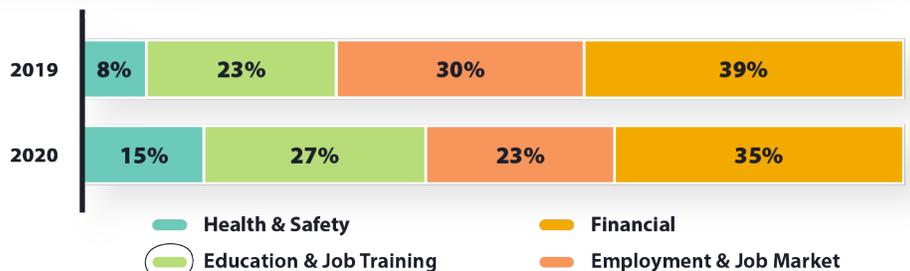
Branches of service from authors align to the distribution of military population, signaling proportionate representation in online conversations.

- Student, **27%**
- Army, **25%**
- Air Force, **14%**
- Navy, **14%**
- Marines, **11%**
- Reserves, **5%**
- Coast Guard, **4%**



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.



SHIFT TO REMOTE LEARNING

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

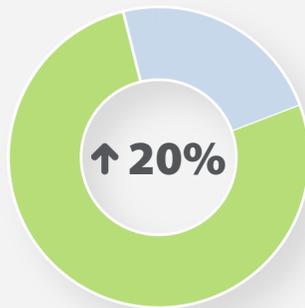


GI BILL VS. HIGHER EDUCATION

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



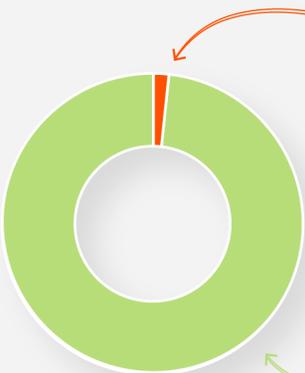
Decrease in GI Bill post volume, 2019-20



Increase in Higher Ed post volume, 2019-20

NON-COLLEGE DEGREES VS. INSTITUTES OF HIGHER EDUCATION

When learning programs are mentioned, most talk about some form of higher education.



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

VET TEC is mentioned in **61%** of NCD discussions.

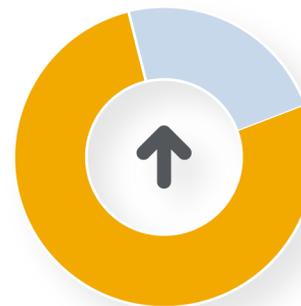
Financial

Discussions point to the GI Bill as a vehicle to gain socioeconomic status.

BUILDING GENERATIONAL WEALTH

- » Graduate with **little to no student loans**
- » **Opens doors** to job opportunities
- » Allows **transferability of benefits** to dependents
- » Provides **financial stability** through Monthly Housing Allowance

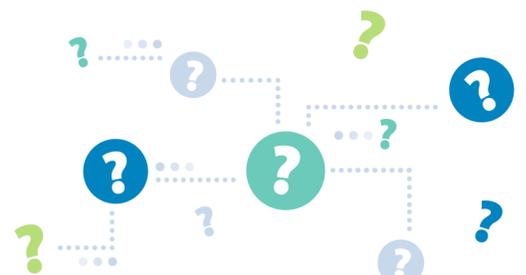
MONTHLY HOUSING ALLOWANCE



Conversations about Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) are

up 23%

QUESTIONS STAKEHOLDERS RAISE ABOUT THEIR MHA



- » **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%

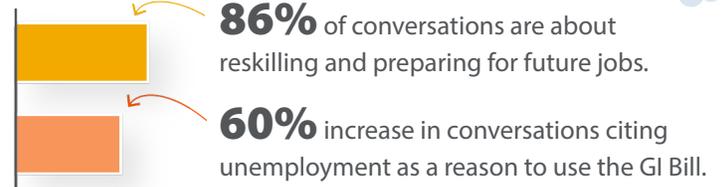
Of all conversations discuss health and safety of in-person learning.

91%

Of these conversations expressed concerns relating to COVID-19.

Employment & Job Market

Stakeholders feel a sense of contributing to economic and personal growth.



"The GI Bill seeded the U.S. economy with higher skilled workers"

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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Produced in collaboration with Accenture.

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