

---

U.S. Representative

***John Spratt***

South Carolina # 5th District

---

**News Release**

---

June 21, 2001, For Immediate Release

Contact: Chuck Fant, 202-225-5501

**Spratt Votes to Increase Aid in GI Bill**

**WASHINGTON – U.S. Rep. John Spratt (D-SC) this week supported and voted for an increase in the amount of educational aid provided by the Montgomery GI Bill, a program that has helped millions of veterans attend college.**

“The GI Bill is one of the greatest laws the Congress of the United States ever passed, but it needs to be upgraded from time to time,” said Spratt. “Our budget resolution provided the funds to improve the college tuition benefits, and I am pleased to see this legislation come through on its heels, so to speak.”

The legislation, which the House passed on June 19 and sent to the Senate, increases the rate of basic educational assistance under the Montgomery GI Bill for full-time study from the current \$650 per month to \$800 a month in Fiscal Year 2002, \$950 per month in Fiscal Year 2003, and \$1,100 per month in Fiscal Year 2004. Service entrants must serve for three years and agree to have their pay reduced \$100 per month in the first year of service (\$1,200 total) to receive the maximum monthly rate for full-time study. When fully phased in, the benefit would provide each eligible veteran with \$39,600 in education funding over 36 months.

Rates would be adjusted proportionally for those who complete a two-year service agreement. For reservists with two years of active duty and at least four years in the selected reserves, the benefit would rise from \$528 per month to \$650 per month in 2002, \$772 per month in 2003, and \$894 per month in 2004.

The original "GI Bill of Rights," established at the end of World War II, gave returning service members a comprehensive package of benefits to compensate for opportunities lost while serving in the military. Educational aid became the most valuable of these benefits, allowing millions of veterans to attend college.

In 1984, Congress enacted the GI Bill, and named the new version the “Montgomery GI Bill” after its chief sponsor, former Rep. “Sonny” Montgomery (D-MS). Spratt co-sponsored and voted for the original Montgomery GI Bill, which reinstated many of the educational benefits to military recruits originally provided by the 1944 law. Under the Montgomery Bill, the Veterans Affairs Department (VA) pays eligible individuals who are pursuing an approved program of education a basic educational assistance allowance to help meet the cost of tuition, subsistence, fees, supplies, books, equipment, and other educational expenses. More than 20 million veterans have taken advantage of these benefits. #