

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 15, 2018

Mr. Andrew S. Clark
Chief Executive Officer
Bridgepoint Education
8620 Spectrum Center Blvd.
San Diego, CA 92123

Dear Mr. Clark:

We write today to express our outrage that Bridgepoint Education is putting more veterans and taxpayer dollars at risk by resuming new GI Bill enrollments at Ashford University. We call on you to immediately halt this practice until the status of the company's GI Bill eligibility is resolved with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

We have long been concerned with Ashford's mistreatment of its students, including veterans, as documented by numerous state and federal investigations, lawsuits, and settlements. The company's latest stunt is just another example of putting profits ahead of students.

Since closing its Clinton, Iowa, campus in 2016, Ashford has faced losing GI Bill eligibility unless the company receives approval from the State of California where its operations are headquartered. Dubious attempts by the company to keep the millions of dollars in GI Bill funds flowing while skirting federal eligibility requirements landed the matter in court – with a VA decision to cut off GI Bill eligibility to Ashford the subject of an ongoing voluntary stay agreement.

With its future GI Bill eligibility in doubt, Ashford announced on November 14, 2017, that it would voluntarily “suspend new enrollment of veteran students utilizing GI Bill benefits”. Stunningly, according to *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Ashford resumed new GI Bill enrollments in early February. In a call with investors, the company acknowledged that the suspension had “negatively impacted fourth-quarter performance.”

Despite the unchanged prospect that Ashford will ultimately lose GI Bill eligibility, the company made the decision that its profits are more important than student veterans – whose educations and lives you threaten to disrupt by enrolling them without certainty of continuing eligibility. We call on you to, instead, do the right thing for veterans – halt new enrollment of GI Bill beneficiaries so that not one additional veteran or taxpayer dollar is put at risk until this matter is resolved with the VA. Failure to do so will lay bare Ashford's utter disregard for the students, and particularly veterans, that it claims to serve.

We look forward to your prompt reply.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator

cc: The Honorable David Shulkin, Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs
Dr. Vito Imbasciani, Secretary, California Department of Veterans Affairs
Ms. Jamieenne Studley, President, WASC Senior College and University Commission