POST-9/11 GI BILL
Veterans Affected by School Closures

What GAO Found
In fiscal year 2017, nearly 700,000 student veterans used their Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to attend programs at almost 6,000 schools. Of the almost $4.5 billion in Post-9/11 GI Bill tuition and fee payments VA made to schools in fiscal year 2017, about 40 percent went to public schools, 30 percent to nonprofits, and 30 percent to for-profits. A small number of schools received a large share of the tuition and fees paid, with 30 percent of payments totaling $1.4 billion going to 50 schools that enrolled over 190,000 veterans in fiscal year 2017.

Although a relatively small number of schools close each year, these closures can affect thousands of student veterans. School closures, which have increased in recent years, are particularly harmful when they involve large schools that close abruptly with little or no advance warning. For example, more than 7,000 veterans receiving Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits were attending schools operated by Corinthian Colleges and ITT Educational Services when they abruptly closed in 2015 and 2016, respectively. Although veterans affected by school closures may qualify to have their GI Bill benefits restored, these closures can create hardships for veterans and significant costs for taxpayers. For example, veterans can face challenges transferring credits and continuing their education at a new school. This may make it more difficult for veterans to complete their degrees before exhausting their eligibility for Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits. School closures also pose a financial risk for the government and taxpayers due to the costs associated with restoring benefits.