

1944

## SERVICEMEN'S READJUSTMENT ACT

Fifteen million men and women serving in the armed services would be out of work at the end of World War II, according to Department of Labor estimates. Because widespread unemployment could cause an economic depression, the National Resources Planning Board recommended a series of programs to address the needs of ex-servicemen and women and, at the same time, strengthen the economy. The American Legion designed the main features of what became the Servicemen's Readjustment Act. Both houses of Congress unanimously passed the bill, and President Franklin Roosevelt signed it into law on June 22, 1944.

American Legion publicist Jack Cefnar called this legislation "the GI Bill of Rights" because it addressed basic needs—hospitalization, loans to purchase or improve homes and businesses, and grants to pay for education—of veterans returning to civilian life. In the long term, the bill not only benefited qualifying individuals but also stimulated the economy. The bill paid for itself in the form of taxes imposed on beneficiaries whose wages increased because of their education or training or whose profits grew from investments they made using government loans.

By 1955 the Veterans Administration had granted 4.3 million home loans, totaling \$33 billion. By 1956, when the original law expired, it had disbursed \$14.5 billion to veterans for education and training programs. Congress has extended the GI Bill several times. Nearly 23 million World War-era veterans and more than 8 million Vietnam-era veterans have participated in the program.

1. This act was better known as?

- a. Bill of Rights
- b. Veterans Bureau
- c. GI Bill of Rights
- d. Veterans Readjustment

2. Who signed this bill into law?

- a. Department of Labor
- b. President Truman
- c. U.S. Congress
- d. President Roosevelt

3. Who did this Act aim to help?

- a. Men currently serving in the military
- b. Ex-servicemen and women returning from WWII
- c. Members of the U.S. Congress
- d. All men returning from WWII

4. What did the law provide our veterans?

- a. Hospitalization
- b. Loans for homes & businesses
- c. Grants to pay for education
- d. All of the above

5: Why was this law called the "Servicemen's Readjustment Act"?

### Document 4:

On last June twenty-ninth, with President Eisenhower's signature, one of the most astounding pieces of legislation in history quietly became a law. Public Law 627 represents such a monumental conception of national public works that its accomplishment will literally dwarf any previous work of man... That new title—the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways—tells the story of the road network, which will receive the major portion of the brave new effort to get this country out of its national traffic jam. The Interstate System... is the 40,000-mile network of existing roads which comprise our trunkline highways; it connects 209 of the 237 cities having a population of 50,000 or more and serves the country's principal industrial and defense areas.  
Source: *Saturday Evening Post*, October 1956.

1. Who signed Public Law 627 into effect?

2. What did the law create?

3. What was the purpose of the law?

4. Why was this law so important?

5. Where do we see the laws effects today?