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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**SDDVA Secretary Whitlock's July Column – Investing in America's Future**

Thousands of veterans will return to school in the next few weeks, and it is important that they understand and utilize their GI Bill® benefits in the pursuit of their education. While the GI Bill® covers nearly every imaginable school related expense from tuition, books, fees, and even a living stipend, we understand that utilizing this benefit can be confusing at times.

The GI Bill® is one of the best benefits of being a military member. This great program helps service members, veterans, and families reach their education goals. However, each program is administrated differently, depending on a person's eligibility and duty status.

There are resources to assist veterans and their families obtain information about how to use their GI Bill® benefits. This information includes how to take advantage of scholarships, how to find out more about housing allowances, book supplies stipends, on-the-job training programs, apprenticeship programs, survivor and dependents assistance or transferring benefits.

Here are some resources available for veterans and families:

County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers – (contact information can be found at: <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteransserviceofficers/locatevso.aspx>).

Campus Veterans Resource Centers and Certifying Officials (contact information can be found at: <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/resources/colleges.aspx>).

South Dakota's State Certifying Officials Shane Olivier ([shane.olivier@state.sd.us](mailto:shane.olivier@state.sd.us)) and Ryan Fowler ([ryan.fowler@state.sd.us](mailto:ryan.fowler@state.sd.us)).

These leaders recognize the specific needs and challenges veterans face in transitioning. Their goal is to empower veterans and military-affiliated students to succeed in their educational and vocational goals. It's investing in the future of America.

Greg Whitlock, Secretary  
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs