

WASHINGTON - Calling further delays unacceptable, Congressman Spencer Bachus (AL-6) today said that veterans depending on GI bill education benefits must have their claims processed more quickly by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Bachus wrote to VA Secretary Eric Shinseki urging the agency to eliminate a backlog in processing benefits that has left veterans in Alabama and across the nation uncertain whether they will be able to afford to attend college during the spring semester.

"Our veterans made a commitment to us and we must keep our commitment to them. In my district and across the country, these delays are forcing veterans into credit card debt, student loans at higher interest rates, and even choosing between going to school or meeting their daily living expenses. The uncertainty of the situation has also affected colleges and universities, many of whom have tried to accommodate veterans by accepting them for classes without an upfront payment," Bachus said in his letter.

Bachus said his office has been working with a number of area veterans who have not even been able to receive an update on the status of their claims.

Congress approved a major expansion of GI bill education benefits to recognize the service that veterans provide for the nation. The VA has struggled to process more than 277,000 new applications submitted since last fall.

Bachus said the agency must put permanent procedures in place to ensure that all veterans receive their scheduled benefits on time.

"The current state of the program is not something that I can accept. The Department of Veterans Affairs must rectify this intolerable situation," Bachus said.

To view Congressman Bachus' letter to VA Secretary Shinseki , [click here](#).

