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The Creation of the G.I. Bill of Rights of 1944: Melding Social and Participatory Citizenship Ideals

The G.I. Bill of Rights, formally known as the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, remains in the public consciousness as one of the most significant social policies ever enacted in the United States.¹ Established for returning veterans of World War II, its terms of coverage were strikingly broad and generous. Fifty-one percent of veterans used the educational provisions: 2.2 million pursued a college education or graduate degree, and 5.6 million attained vocational or on-the-job training. The law also offered extensive unemployment benefits, which were used to the full by 14 percent of veterans. It also offered low-interest loans for the purchase of homes, farms, and businesses, which were used by 29 percent of veterans.²

Some scholars who have analyzed the G.I. Bill recently tend to assume that it was created with the explicit purpose of expanding the middle class and increasing access to advanced education, and they assess the law's accomplishments against such objectives.³ Such treatments overlook policymakers' intentions and the politics of the bill's enactment. The G.I. Bill was passed when the social democratic momentum and spirit of reform that marked the New Deal had already subsided.⁴ By the early 1940s, President Franklin D. Roosevelt focused considerably less on domestic policymaking, concentrating on his role as "Dr. Win the War" rather than as "Dr. New Deal."⁵ Furthermore, Congress had grown increasingly conservative and interest in social legislation had declined sharply.⁶ Certainly widespread support existed among citizens for the

enactment of some kind of measures to ease veterans' transitions back to civilian life.⁷ Nonetheless, at that juncture, the creation of what would later become known as landmark social provision, extended on such generous terms and to such a large number of citizens and their families, remained anything but a foregone conclusion.

Although the standard histories of the G.I. Bill's enactment offer valuable descriptions of the political struggles inherent in the process,⁸ they fail to illuminate how the legislation acquired such a magnanimous and inclusive design. Recently, Theda Skocpol pointed out that the Roosevelt administration had offered only a modest and somewhat elitist proposal, one that would have limited education to one year for all but a very few veterans. Rather, it was the American Legion, an organization with a conservative, antistatist reputation, that put forth the sweeping version of the law that Congress affirmed, a proposal that offered up to four years of education, on terms commensurate with the duration of veterans' military service.⁹ Skocpol emphasizes that the organizational capacity of the American Legion generated widespread grassroots support for the G.I. Bill, thus helping to assure its passage. Still puzzling, however, is how the legislation acquired such comprehensive features in the hand of the Legion, and why the Roosevelt administration appeared to be so marginal to its creation.

This article aims to explain the politics through which the G.I. Bill acquired its inclusive design, and to consider the lessons it offers about the possibilities for social policymaking within the United States. It draws on archival materials from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, the National Archives, the American Legion headquarters, and numerous government documents. While the American Legion claims to have developed the G.I. Bill itself in a three-week period, with "amazing skill and speed,"¹⁰ its proposal derived from both a decades-old "political learning" process from past veterans' policies in the United States and from ideas developed by others, particularly within the National Resources Planning Board (NRPB) of the Roosevelt administration. NRPB members had set their sights on expanded educational access, and even as those hopes dimmed, a committee under the board's auspices hatched plans for education and training for veterans. Yet, by 1943, Congress had stripped the NRPB of its funding and authority and discredited its ideas as "socialist" and "totalitarian"; any proposal associated with it would have been politically untenable. The widespread, federated American Legion stood perfectly poised to present kindred plans in the form of the G.I. Bill, and to usher the law toward swift passage.

The G.I. Bill emerged out of what might appear at first blush to be contradictory discourses about the meaning of citizenship in the American

polity. The NRPB had proposed educational provisions as a means of expanding social citizenship, of access to economic security and welfare,¹¹ for all Americans. The Legion, by contrast, focused on the deservedness of veterans, noting continually that they had performed the ultimate act of participatory citizenship through military service, and that expanded social rights would enable them to lead in civic life as civilians in the postwar era. These visions melded neatly together in the creation of the G.I. Bill, forging a deepening of the American welfare state by bringing the politics of left and right together in a landmark social policy.

The Historical Legacy of U.S. Social Provision for Citizen-Soldiers

Public programs for veterans enjoyed a long, established history in the United States. Whereas European nations had targeted early social programs to “citizen-workers” on the basis of their participation in the workforce, the United States extended resources to “citizen-soldiers.”¹² This independent course steered by the United States in welfare state development owes, in part, to the democratic ideals so central to the nation’s identity: military service was recognized as the utmost obligation of masculine citizenship, and the protection of the nation by ordinary citizens, as opposed to a standing army, was considered essential to maintaining self-governance.¹³ In turn, those who had served were considered deserving of social provision.

Broadly speaking, then, the G.I. Bill continued a long legacy of social provision geared toward veterans. In 1818, three decades after the Revolutionary War, pensions were granted to veterans who had served for at least two years if they were disabled or destitute; similar benefits were extended to veterans of the War of 1812 and the Mexican War. By the late nineteenth century, as European nations extended social rights to their citizens as employees or their dependents, the United States developed increasingly generous policies for veterans and their dependents. The initial policy for Civil War veterans, established in 1862, offered pensions to those who had suffered a disability in military service, death benefits for veterans’ dependents, and preferred status to acquire land under homestead legislation. In 1890, Congress expanded the benefits based on financial need, age, and length of service, and for deaths and disabilities that were not service related.¹⁴ By the turn-of-the-century, such pensions had become fairly generous and widespread. The result was that social provision was extended more than adequately to men who had proven

their civic duty to the nation through military service, but not to others, regardless of their participation in the workforce.

In terms of its specific design, however, the G.I. Bill represented a departure from the particular form of earlier veterans' benefits—predominantly direct, long-term payments to able-bodied veterans for many years after the war's end—given that the approach had fallen into disfavor among some policymakers. Over time, the Civil War pensions had earned a poor reputation among Progressive reformers. They were designed as what Theodore Lowi terms “patronage” or “distributive” policies, which are necessarily particularistic—aimed at a specific group to reward particular behavior.¹⁵ Program administration exacerbated this feature: pensions were delivered through the patronage system of party politics, which permitted a high degree of discretion to local politicians, who could in practice control the timing and targeting of benefits for political purposes.¹⁶ As a result, their delivery became associated with corruption, at least among those who sought to weaken the patronage party system.

Beginning with World War I, policymakers sought to create benefits that would be less expensive, less open to corruption, and more oriented toward the promotion of self-reliance among veterans. Rather than providing disability pensions, policymakers offered veterans the option of purchasing low-cost insurance akin to that in the new workmen's compensation laws. For the first time, vocational programs were made available, but only to disabled veterans in need of rehabilitation. Congress also authorized medical and hospital care for disabled veterans.¹⁷

Veterans found the new approach unsatisfactory. Few elected to purchase the insurance, which meant that they had no recourse in times of need. They deemed the vocational programs to be poorly administered,¹⁸ and the medical provisions insufficiently funded. Widespread dissatisfaction grew among veterans and they lobbied Congress for compensation in the form of a “bonus.” In 1924, over presidential vetoes, Congress enacted such legislation and promised first payments in 1945. In 1931, however, after the Depression hit, policymakers conceded that veterans could begin to borrow against future bonuses. Yet, a year later, with economic conditions still worsening, a “Bonus Army” of veterans descended on Washington to demand immediate payment of their benefits. In a political misstep by the Hoover administration, Army troops led by General Douglas MacArthur stormed their encampments and drove them out of town.

The Roosevelt administration responded to veterans more graciously than had the Hoover administration, but it embraced a new policy approach. Roosevelt agreed that disabled veterans deserved special

treatment from government. But rather than separating nondisabled veterans from other citizens through targeted programs, New Deal policies incorporated them into broad-based social programs. The president made his position clear when he addressed the American Legion in 1933: "no person, because he wore a uniform, must thereafter be placed in a special class of beneficiaries over and above all other citizens. The fact of wearing a uniform does not mean that he can demand and receive from his Government a benefit which no other citizen receives."¹⁹ Roosevelt followed up his rhetoric with action: the 1933 Economy Act repealed existing veterans' legislation and authorized the president to issue new regulations; through forty-one subsequent executive orders, the president eliminated pensions for nonservice disabilities, reduced compensation rates, dropped nearly 700,000 from the rolls, and introduced a means test (though Congress did, in 1936, enact a \$2 billion veterans' bonus bill over Roosevelt's veto).²⁰ Instead, jobs were made available to thousands in the Civilian Conservation Corps and later in the Federal Emergency Relief Administration.²¹ Then the New Deal proceeded, through its core pieces of social and labor legislation, to expand American social citizenship by bestowing rights primarily on citizen-workers.²²

Thus, as World War II began, previous policy experiences shaped the expectations and assumptions of public officials and leaders of veterans' organizations about what kinds of programs should be fashioned for returning veterans. Most policymakers and citizens considered veterans to be deserving of government benefits, and they regarded the approach used for World War I veterans to have been inadequate. As alternatives to that failed approach, some policymakers continued to advance the New Deal vision of benefits for citizens generally rather than for veterans in particular. Others advocated a return to the traditional pension approach, with targeted benefits for those who had served the nation in the military. Ironically, the G.I. Bill would offer an approach that differed from earlier programs in form but would maintain their inclusive generosity, thus garnering support from both groups. That alternative only emerged, however, through a political process involving numerous players and several iterations of draft proposals.

Momentum for the G.I. Bill in the Roosevelt Administration

Even as President Roosevelt's attention became increasingly absorbed by foreign policy and the possibility of entering the war, he offered what was

arguably his most stirring rhetoric in support of expanded social democracy. In the State of the Union Address in January 1941, Roosevelt pronounced the Four Freedoms that should be extended to Americans: “freedom of speech and expression,” “freedom of every person to worship God in his own way,” “freedom from want,” and “freedom from fear.”²³ He asserted that these freedoms comprised the “moral order” that the nation must strive to attain, as important as military goals. Roosevelt placed the most emphasis on “freedom from want,” meaning “economic understandings that will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants.”²⁴

During the early 1940s, the National Resources Planning Board carried the torch for this ambitious agenda, eventually developing specific proposals aimed to meet the objectives implied by the Four Freedoms language. In the meanwhile, though, Roosevelt departed from endorsing such goals, supporting instead the far narrower postwar plans forged by educational officials and military leaders. Yet, though the efforts of the NRPB appeared to come to naught, in fact such goals would be quite well reflected in what eventually became the G.I. Bill.

The National Resources Planning Board

Acting by executive order in 1939, Roosevelt had established the National Resources Planning Board (NRPB) for the purpose of long-range planning to develop and to protect the natural resources of the nation. In time, the mission of the planners became increasingly broad.²⁵ Headed by Roosevelt’s uncle, Frederick Delano, a well-known city planner, the NRPB moved well beyond the management of river basins, forests, and dams.²⁶ By the beginning of the 1940s, the president asked the NRPB to work on “Post-Defense Planning.” The agency set its sights on making New Deal social policies more generous, expanding them to all Americans, and, most important, on the pursuit of a full-employment economy. Its goals were ambitious: “We shall plan to enable every human being within our boundaries to realize progressively the promises of American life in food, shelter, clothing, medical care, education, work, rest, opportunity to advance, and the basic freedoms.”²⁷ The board subsequently built on the language in the president’s earlier speech and proposed additional freedoms, one of which was “the right to education for work, for citizenship, and for personal growth and happiness.”²⁸

The NRPB issued reports detailing its plans for the nation. The hallmark of these proposals was the insistence that rights of social citizenship should be extended to all Americans. The most well known report,

entitled *Security, Work and Relief Policies*, captured the social democratic vision as it set forth plans to expand New Deal social insurance and public assistance programs.²⁹ It proclaimed, "The major objective of public-aid policy is and should be to assure minimum security for all our people wherever they may reside, and to maintain the social stability and values threatened when people lack jobs or income."³⁰ At the same time, the NRPB emphasized full employment as its major objective and the context in which all of its other goals were to be understood. At the same time, the board's vision transcended the material goals of employment and economic security, harkening social values of community, equality, and access for all citizens.

Thus, a central priority of the NRPB was that social benefits should broadly encompass the general population. It argued, "Military service has long been recognized as establishing a claim against the Government. . . . More recently we have come to recognize that any person who makes his contribution to our national life is entitled to protection against the necessary interruptions of income."³¹ Such language reflected the antipathy of New Deal liberals to benefits for veterans only and their preference for social provision with universal eligibility criteria.³² All people were to be included, with "equal rights, equal justice, equal opportunity, equal recognition, [and] equal responsibilities."³³

A NRPB report on the subject of postwar planning, written in the same ebullient tone as the others, set its ultimate goal as "protecting justice, freedom, and democracy." These lofty objectives were to be realized through "the fullest possible development of the productive potential of all of our resources, material and human, with full employment, continuity of income, [and] equal access to minimum security and living standards."³⁴ Notably, educational policies were identified as a means to attaining such outcomes. A lengthy section entitled "Equal Access to Education" emphasized the centrality of education to civic life: "The school has much to contribute in imparting attitudes that make for successful association with other persons, particularly in home and family life. It also has an obligation to provide an understanding of the requirements of national security in all its forms, and adequate preparation in national defense. Citizenship in the broadest sense should be cultivated in the schools."³⁵ The section called for "equal access to general and specialized education to all youth of college and university age, according to their abilities and the needs of society." It suggested that men and women discharged from the armed services *and* war industries should be able to secure additional education or training so as to reequip themselves for the postwar world.

Together, the NRPB reports from the early 1940s might appear to have foreshadowed, in two important ways, what would later become the G.I. Bill. First, they articulated the needs for young people to receive additional education and training beyond compulsory school attendance age. While such goals were tied to economic objectives, they were rooted most fundamentally in notions of social rights of citizenship. Second, they underscored connections between social and participatory citizenship, viewing social rights as a means toward livelier civic engagement. As in the earlier reports, the rationale given for education opportunities was “to acquire that degree of formal and cultural education which is essential for the exercise of citizenship in a democratic society.”³⁶ Yet, the vision set forth by the NRPB seemed to dissipate quickly, failing to take more tangible form in the postwar policy proposals developed subsequently by the administration.

Postwar Planning

The Roosevelt administration’s departure from the bold NRPB ideals began with its own postwar planning subcommittee, which included members whose priorities departed from the agency’s goals. In July 1942, Delano advised Roosevelt of the need to generate more specific proposals for the postwar demobilization, noting that “announcement of such a program will give assurance to young men interrupting their normal occupations or training that at the end of war service they will have substantial assistance in adjusting to, and engaging in, their civil pursuits.”³⁷ In response, Roosevelt hedged, saying, “this is no time for a public interest in or discussion of post-war problems—on the broad ground that there will not be any post-war problems if we lose this war. This includes the danger of diverting people’s attention from the winning of the war.” He did agree, however, to a “wholly unpublicized, ‘off the record’” examination of the subject and charged Delano with establishing a small committee to meet, study the issues, and make recommendations.³⁸

Although the “Conference on Post-War Readjustments of Civilian and Military Personnel,” or the “PMC,” as the new committee was called, was formally under the auspices of the NRPB, it included individuals who had a far less progressive view of postwar planning. Ironically, several of them hailed from the field of higher education itself. The chair of the group was Floyd W. Reeves, a respected educator and advocate of adult education, who was on leave from the University of Chicago while serving on the staff of the American Council on Education.³⁹ Reeves had been appointed by Roosevelt in 1937 to chair an advisory committee on

education that would conduct a study of needs in vocational education.⁴⁰ Although his efforts at that time were unsuccessful, Reeves's advice had been sought subsequently by the NRPB.⁴¹ The twelve-person committee that he chaired also included several other individuals with a keen interest and expertise in matters of education: Francis Brown, a World War I veteran and a professor of education at Columbia University; Colonel Francis Spaulding, former dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education; and Lieutenant Commander Ralph A. Sentman, a retired officer in charge of the Educational Services Section of the Navy.⁴² Higher education remained an elite endeavor before World War II, and while representatives of the field promoted educational plans through the PMC, they were cautious about opening the doors to the academy too widely. The American Council on Education, with which Reeves and Brown were associated, opposed plans that mirrored the "bonus principle" in earlier veterans' benefits and on those grounds refused to reward additional educational benefits for veterans who had served for long periods.⁴³ Military members of the PMC, furthermore, tended to be more fiscally conservative than other NRPB members.⁴⁴

Hence, the plans drafted by the PMC paled by comparison to the bold rhetoric in the NRPB reports. Where the NRPB had become associated with plans to include everyone, equally, in generous social provisions, the PMC proposed a more restricted approach. As a result, the committee's plans assumed the ironic position of being castigated as "socialist" and "totalitarian" because they came from a group formally under the auspices of the NRPB, while in fact they would have extended education to very few veterans and only to those selected through a rigorous process. Certainly the plans carried on some of the specific objectives of the NRPB itself, such as offering educational opportunities; what they lacked was the overarching spirit of the board, the emphasis on generosity and inclusion.

PMC members' views about the nature of the challenges inherent in demobilization influenced the policy alternatives they considered reasonable. Delano began the committee's work by asking members to consider three principles: (1) military demobilization must include attention to reemployment for civilian employees; (2) many wartime workers, both civilian and military, would require retraining in the shift from a war to postwar economy; and (3) training should be carried out in combination with vocational counseling.⁴⁵ When the PMC met in July 1942, Brigadier General Frank T. Hines, administrator of the Veterans' Administration, reminded members of the mistakes involved in the demobilization that followed World War I. He suggested that perhaps soldiers should be retained in the

service, and discharged slowly, as a means to lessen the likelihood of wide-scale unemployment after the war. Several other members suggested that, alternatively, higher education and training of other types could provide a means to “solve the bottlenecks and to get around difficulties” implicit in demobilization.⁴⁶

Subsequently, the PMC considered a historical precedent for veterans’ educational benefits from a pioneering state, and another nation’s current plans. Not surprisingly, the American precedent, the Wisconsin Educational Bonus Law of 1919, came from the same state whose Progressive Era social policies had served as a model for several components of the Social Security Act.⁴⁷ Enacted with the understanding that the people of Wisconsin wanted to express their gratitude to those who had performed their “sacred duty to defend the government in time of need,”⁴⁸ the law had permitted World War I veterans to continue their education in a wide variety of settings, including public schools, vocational and agricultural schools, and universities. Matters of admissions were handled directly between the individual applicant and the educational institution; minimal public administrative authority was involved in the implementation of the law. Students received a cash bonus of \$30 per month for up to four academic years of nine months each.⁴⁹ Looking across the border, the PMC found that Canada had developed plans for veterans’ educational benefits. Such benefits were to include benefits of \$60 monthly for single veterans and additional dependents’ allowances for married veterans and those with children; the period of coverage would correspond to the amount of time the veteran had served. PMC members subsequently traveled to Montreal to consult with Canadian officials and brought the chairman of the Canadian Committee on Demobilization and Readjustment to Washington to advise them.⁵⁰

At PMC meetings in later months, when Hines once again cautioned that disaffected, “idle” veterans might rally in support of expensive bonus payments like those eventually granted to World War I veterans, Reeves argued that the committee had already found the solution: federal aid for educational purposes. In this discussion, some Committee members still seemed to echo the idealistic aims of the NRPB. Reeves suggested that educational benefits should not be for veterans only, but also for workers in defense industries. Colonel Spaulding and Dr. A. F. Hinrichs, a statistician from the Department of Labor, quickly added that because distinctions between “essential” and “non-essential” war workers would be difficult if not impossible to make, such provisions should be extended to all unemployed citizens who required education. The members also agreed that

citizens should be able to use such educational benefits not only for higher education, but for vocational training as well.⁵¹

Once the PMC began to draft an actual proposal, however, such ideals slipped away. The plan that emerged called for a maximum of only one year of education and training.⁵² As mechanisms to facilitate rapid demobilization, the committee proposed that veterans be eligible for “separation pay” of \$100 per month for three months; unemployment benefits for up to twenty-six weeks within one calendar year following discharge; and training and education benefits at universities, colleges, and in vocational schools. Most striking, the plan mandated that veterans’ benefits for higher education would be contingent upon competitive examinations, and thus restricted to a relatively small number of veterans. Keeping the NRPB goal of full employment in mind, they were compelled to require that university and college study for veterans would be limited to “a selected group of courses in general, technical, and professional fields of education.”⁵³ Similarly, in the area of vocational benefits, the PMC declared that ex-servicepersons could not pursue “those occupations in which the supply of trained personnel is already large enough to meet anticipated employment demands.”⁵⁴ The program was to be administered by the NRPB with the cooperation of “educational agencies throughout the country,” including the U.S. Office of Education.⁵⁵

Even these modest proposals, however, generated little support from President Roosevelt. When he made them public at a press conference in July 1943, a reporter asked, “Mr. President, are you releasing that with your approval?” Roosevelt replied that he endorsed the “general objective,” but not “every word” of the report.⁵⁶ In fact, in a fireside chat a few days before, Roosevelt had sketched a five-point plan of benefits for returning veterans, which closely resembled the PMC guidelines and included education and training benefits.⁵⁷ Yet, his noncommittal approach to the PMC report may have reflected political considerations, given the sinking reputation of the NRPB on Capitol Hill.

Mass Public and Elite Reactions

While Roosevelt was certainly preoccupied by the war in the early 1940s, his seeming inattention to the NRPB reports and to the PMC proposal likely showed his awareness that the planning agency lacked sufficient political support in Congress. This was the case despite the fact that the general public appeared to be quite enthusiastic about the plans. Public opinion pollsters found that when citizens were asked how they felt about the NRPB’s proposal for broadening social security, 76 percent said they

approved and only 15 percent disapproved (others had no opinion), with the strongest opposition coming from upper-income individuals and business leaders. Only 23 percent felt “the Plan is too much like Communism,” whereas 69 percent agreed that “we must plan like this now if we are going to do away with unemployment after the war.”⁵⁸ Regarding returning soldiers, most Americans opposed granting bonuses but applauded means to help them return to the job market. Most striking, nearly 90 percent of citizens concurred that veterans should be “given a chance to go back to school at government’s expense once the war is over.”⁵⁹

Letters sent to the White House gave voice to citizens’ high levels of support for the plans. A telegraph operator wrote that the “Social Security Plan” (as the Security, Work and Relief report was commonly called) was “the greatest proclamation since President Lincoln’s proclamation to free the Negroes.”⁶⁰ Another man expounded, “Fortunate indeed are the people of this nation to have a President . . . who is willing to stand up for that class of people who so badly need it.”⁶¹ Servicemen voiced particular appreciation for the postwar plans; a sergeant stationed “somewhere in Italy” wrote: “These efforts put forth by yourself and staff amidst the trials and tribulations of a world at war adds only to our devotion of the country we serve . . . it is . . . an assurance that we are not to be forgotten.”⁶² One writer specifically endorsed the clauses about equal access to education, commenting, “Too many of us have seen our children denied an education due to lack of funds,” and another urged education for discharged servicemen so that they could be “trained for more useful citizenship.”⁶³

Yet, editorial coverage in newspapers, which had long been critical of the New Deal, ran more than two to one against the NRPB reports.⁶⁴ In a March 12 editorial, the *New York News* called the proposal a “ground-plan for an American state which will closely resemble fascism,” and the *Detroit Free Press* commented, “State socialism is the clear end-product of a number of the recommendations.”⁶⁵ Local chapters of the Chamber of Commerce went further in their criticisms. The Ohio organization called the NRPB reports “a death thrust at state sovereignty, national solvency, American manhood, [and] post-war recovery.”⁶⁶ Other members of the public compared planning to dictatorship and fascism: “Though all of us would greatly prefer you and your Uncle Delano as partners to Hitler, Tojo, et al., most of us don’t want any of you.”⁶⁷

In Congress, NRPB opponents dominated and thus, in the spring of 1943, both Houses voted to terminate agency funding. Republicans, namely Everett Dirksen from Illinois in the House and Robert Taft from Ohio in the Senate, led the charge against “utopian” New Deal

planning.⁶⁸ The NRPB funding was scheduled to end on August 31, 1943, just one month after the PMC report was released. In short, the president's lukewarm response to the PMC report was hardly surprising given the highly charged political context that surrounded the NRPB at that time. With the demise of the NRPB, the Roosevelt administration's most adamant voices for broad-based postwar social provision lost their institutional leverage.

The Osborn Committee Proposals

Despite his lack of attention to the PMC recommendations, Roosevelt remained sincere in his desire for postwar planning for the armed forces, and especially for education and training provisions. Even while the PMC was still conducting its work, he established a committee of educators, separate from the NRPB, to focus explicitly on education and training program possibilities for veterans.⁶⁹ On November 13, 1942, when the president signed an amendment to the Selective Service Act in 1918, lowering the draft age to eighteen, he announced the formation of the committee under the auspices of the Navy and War departments that would make plans for a program to enable "the young men whose education has been interrupted to resume their schooling and afford equal opportunity for training and education of other young men of ability after their service in the armed forces has come to an end."⁷⁰ Roosevelt's political savvy was manifest in his timing: he announced the initiative at the same point as he expanded the draft, showing his awareness of the public's qualms about drafting teenagers and offering a means to soften the measure.⁷¹ The move also demonstrated political ingenuity: unlike the PMC, which operated under the disfavored NRPB, the new committee would serve under the military directly, and thus might enjoy more support in Congress.

Importantly, the committee's mandate was fashioned to focus on veterans only: postwar planning for civilians working in defense industries vanished at this juncture. Underscoring the narrower focus of the new group, Roosevelt named it the Armed Forces Committee on Postwar Educational Opportunities for Service Personnel. He appointed a brigadier general, Frederick H. Osborn, chief of Special Services in the War Department, to serve as chairman; the committee subsequently became known as the Osborn Committee. Like the PMC, the Osborn Committee's membership consisted primarily of professionals from the field of education, including some who had served in the prior group.⁷²

The Osborn Committee report, which served, effectively, as a blueprint for the Roosevelt administration's legislative proposal for veterans'

benefits, conveyed objectives of the NRPB only in their narrowest form, and was stripped of the inclusive spirit that had animated the board's own proposals. Unanimously approved by the committee, the report proposed a "system of federal grants, supplemented by loans, to individual ex-service personnel, as a means of helping to overcome the serious educational shortages created by the war."⁷³ As rationales for the policy, the report stressed the need to deal with the problem of educational shortages in particular occupations created by the war: it cited estimates by the American Council on Education that 70 percent fewer individuals would complete college work in agriculture in 1943-44 than in 1939-40; 40 percent fewer would graduate from liberal arts colleges and 80 percent fewer from law schools. The committee did retain some of the NRPB's emphasis on the civic goals of educational and training provisions, noting: "From the point of view of the nation, it is equally practical to insure that the ex-service group, some of whose members will inevitably have been completely out of touch with the normal workings of the democratic scheme of life over extended periods, shall contain a large leaven of people extensively schooled in civic and liberal education."⁷⁴ But like the PMC, the Osborn Committee also tried to balance its ambitious goals, unprecedented in the United States (with the exception of the Wisconsin program), with fiscal conservatism. The plan proposed that all veterans who had served for at least six months should be able to have one year of education or training, at whatever level was most appropriate for them, from elementary-level literacy training to graduate work. Yet, only a "limited number of exceptionally able ex-service personnel" who demonstrated "unusual promise and ability"—just 100,000, the committee proposed—would be assisted in pursuing education beyond one year.⁷⁵ They would be eligible for assistance, furthermore, only if their coursework served recognized areas of need, and even then their aid would be partly in the form of grants and partly in the form of loans. The proposal offered greater specificity than the PMC report on various counts: single veterans should be granted monthly allowances of \$50, and married veterans, \$75. The administrative scheme for the program would involve cooperation between the federal government, states, and educational institutions; it was complicated by the need to determine which veterans should be allowed to continue beyond the first year of education, an exercise to be managed through state quotas and national competition.

Just as Roosevelt received the Osborn Committee report, the issue of veterans' benefits began to gain momentum in Congress. Despite the administration's extensive work over the past few years to lay the ground for postwar programs, it generated little initiative at this stage. Members

of Congress had already developed plans quite independently. In many important regards, these early initiatives ran counter to the hopes of those in the Roosevelt administration to avoid a return to veterans' "bonuses."

Momentum in Congress

On August 6, 1943, VA Administrator Frank T. Hines wrote a memo to Roosevelt, marked for his "personal attention." It read:

Even at this early date the talk of bonus in various forms is cropping up, and in my judgment it would be well if some steps were taken to discourage such movements. We again hear the same talk of high wages at home while the men are fighting abroad, no credit being given for benefits now authorized for men who are in the armed forces. . . . I do not feel that is it too late [to] . . . point out the dangers in again passing legislation for special bonus for services rendered. I am sure that the men who serve in our armed forces wish to stand on their own feet and earn their own living, and our efforts most certainly should be devoted in that direction.⁷⁶

Seeking to avoid what was widely considered the neglect of World War I veterans, members of Congress and leaders of organizations were already advancing plans for bonuses for the new veterans. Such developments dismayed many across the American political spectrum, from NRPB officials to the American Legion leaders, who considered employment to be a more appropriate long-term solution for veterans than costly pensions.⁷⁷ In his memo, Hines reminded Roosevelt of the "plans of the Federal Government" for employment of veterans and training to enable such employment.⁷⁸ Hines was referring, of course, to proposals of the PMC, on which he had served. Yet, the Roosevelt administration had still not submitted legislation to Congress, prompting an aide to warn Harry Hopkins, "Unless something is done soon on the legislation of returning soldiers, the opposition may steal the thunder."⁷⁹

Indeed, twenty-six veterans' bills for all varieties of bonuses had been introduced in the House by the time the Roosevelt administration submitted legislation on October 27.⁸⁰ As Roosevelt transmitted the proposals of the Osborn Committee to Congress, he stressed the nation's obligation to veterans, and, specifically, the need for veterans to have the opportunity

for an education.⁸¹ Notably, Roosevelt emphasized the civic goals of the policy: “We must replenish our supply of persons qualified to discharge the heavy responsibilities of the postwar world. We have taught our youth how to wage war; we must also teach them how to live useful and happy lives in freedom, justice, and democracy.”⁸² He also stressed the classic NRPB theme of access to social benefits: “Lack of money should not prevent any veteran of this war from equipping himself for the most useful employment for which his aptitudes and willingness qualify him.”⁸³ Still, the president, in keeping with the Osborn Committee plans, proposed to offer veterans merely one year of education or training, with only a limited number selected on a competitive basis to continue for more years. Over subsequent weeks, Roosevelt asked Congress to act on several other separate pieces of veterans’ legislation: for “mustering-out” pay, a uniform system of unemployment benefits, and credit for veterans’ military service under the Social Security system.⁸⁴ All were incorporated in a Senate bill sponsored by Elbert D. Thomas (Utah), a former political science professor and loyal New Dealer, and Chair of the Committee on Education and Labor. But elements of the Thomas bill would be surpassed quickly by features of the American Legion’s G.I. Bill.

The American Legion Leads the Charge

The American Legion has claimed much of the credit for drafting the G.I. Bill.⁸⁵ In some regards, such attribution is misplaced, given that the Legion’s bill borrowed so liberally from plans already developed by the administration. Indeed, the foundational work for what became the G.I. Bill came directly from the Roosevelt administration, with its years of deliberation over such plans. Yet, at the same time, the Legion proved indispensable in making the G.I. Bill what it was, by altering policy-design features from the Osborn Committee plans in ways that restored to the bill the spirit of the inclusivity and common citizenship that had been lost when the NRPB proved incapable of leading the charge. Interestingly, the Legion was best poised to enlarge upon—indeed, to liberalize—the legislation. Furthermore, the Legion unquestionably deserves the credit for mounting the powerful public relations effort and grass-roots campaign that helped speed the G.I. Bill through Congress.⁸⁶

Two months after the announcement of the PMC and Osborn Committee reports, the American Legion had just begun to plan for World War II veterans’ legislation. At its 25th Annual Convention in September 1943, the Legion authorized a special committee to examine

how veterans could be assisted with rehabilitation following discharge.⁸⁷ The organization passed several resolutions affirming its support for veterans' benefits, including the continuation of nationally administered unemployment insurance, which had become standard practice during the war, counseling and provision of federally funded schooling for veterans who desired it, and preferential placement in public and private sector jobs for veterans.⁸⁸ Demonstrating once again the importance of legacies of prior policies, Legion leaders later explained, "But these, in turn, had antecedents in the experience of all of us in the miserable years for war veterans after WW1 and in the Legion's struggles since 1919 to arrive at a better system."⁸⁹ Legion membership was composed primarily of World War I veterans, convinced from their own experience that a new strategy must be used for the readjustment of returning veterans.

While the specific objectives of the Legion sounded similar to those of the PMC and the Osborn Committee, and while they mirrored Roosevelt's preference of emphasizing jobs over long-term pensions, the organization articulated its larger goal in a decidedly pro-market, antistatist manner: "to avoid mass unemployment and provide full employment in the post-war period and support of the free enterprise system, with Government control limited."⁹⁰ The emphasis was not surprising, given the Legion's history. In contrast to the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), the Legion had never been fully supportive of pensions or "bonus" payments for able-bodied veterans, and when it had, in the 1920s, offered tacit support for bonuses, two hundred thousand members promptly quit. Neither had the Legion given its wholehearted support to the Bonus Army in 1932. Moreover, the organization had long considered encroachments on the free market system as attacks on Americanism. Created in 1919 at the same time as the Third Communist International and the American Communist Party, the Legion aided state and local officials who lacked sufficient police forces to combat striking workers, otherwise known as the "Red Menace." More recently, it had supported the formation of the Dies and House Un-American Activities Committee. And while its leaders expressed concern about needy veterans during the Depression, formally the organization supported voluntary provision of aid by local Legion posts rather than expanded government benefits.⁹¹

Like reformers associated with the Roosevelt administration, Legion officials articulated their vision of the postwar world in terms of citizenship-oriented goals, but the principles on which their vision rested contrasted to the social democratic ideals of the NRPB. First and foremost, the Legion emphasized that veterans were deserving because they had risen to the highest demands of participatory citizenship. As

articulated by Harry Colmery, former national commander of the American Legion, a lawyer, and the person most responsible for drafting the Legion's bill: "We recognize that the burden of war falls upon the citizen soldier, who has gone forth, overnight, to become the answer and hope of humanity. . . . We seek to preserve his rights, to see that he gets a square deal, is not imposed on; to protect him against the injustices which result from the error and weaknesses, and human failures, which are inherent in a large scale mass demobilization."⁹² Legion rhetoric was more likely than that of the administration to refer to national security goals, as articulated by National Commander Warren H. Atherton:

However great may be the service of the men and women who have served on the battlefields or home front in this war, an even greater obligation will face them when peace returns. This continuing duty of citizenship is to apply the lessons of this war to the establishment of a better and stronger nation. As these veterans have led in war, so must they lead in peace. . . . With this obligation of citizenship in view, the Voice of the Veteran of World Wars I and II must be heard in the post-war readjustment of this nation's internal and external affairs.⁹³

Language about the obligations of citizenship occurred frequently in Legion rhetoric, though sometimes referring to the nation's responsibility to retrain veterans for peace:

Now, this educational provision has a much deeper significance. . . . The Nation needs the trained mind and body attuned again to the peaceful pursuits of American life, because, trained in the art of destruction of both property and life in every personal and mechanical method, the Nation then will owe an obligation to them. It has to take them back sympathetically away from the horrors and stark reality of war and give them every opportunity to again become disciplined forces for peaceful progress through educational opportunity in its every aspect.⁹⁴

Interestingly, despite the difference in emphasis, the American Legion's vision of veterans in leadership of the postwar world shared common ground with the Roosevelt administration's desire to prepare veterans for democratic citizenship.

At a meeting of the Legion's Executive Committee on November 18, 1943, John Stelle, former governor of Illinois, proposed a resolution that

resulted in the formation of a special committee to plan comprehensive veterans' legislation. With Stelle serving as its chairman, the committee convened in Washington, D.C., on December 15 to begin planning legislation. Only three weeks later, as of January 6, 1944, the Legion had already produced its bill. Legion historian Raymond Moley has written, "Hard, tedious days and nights of unremitting toil passed before the first draft was ready."⁹⁵ Yet, the Legions' ability to craft legislation in such a short period of time must be put into perspective: it was possible only because so many others had already developed plans from which the organization could construct its own proposal. The Legion consulted with numerous experts who had long been involved in postwar planning. The educational provisions in the resulting bill were influenced by advice from the American Council on Education, which had been so involved in both the PMC and Osborn Committee. In fact, Thomas's Senate Committee on Education and Labor held hearings on the educational components of the administration's plan from December 13 to 15, 1943, at the same time as the Legion drafted its bill. Legion leaders later noted that Thomas was largely responsible for the educational provisions of their bill.⁹⁶ The title on low-interest loans was shaped by the Federal Housing Administration as well as building-and-loan and financial associations, and the sections on job placement for veterans and unemployment compensation were guided by the Interstate Conference of Employment Securities Agencies and the Unemployment Benefit Advisors.⁹⁷ In effect, the Legion benefited from years of work, conducted primarily by government officials with the cooperation of leaders in education, to create expanded social legislation, and it had pulled several ideas together into a comprehensive piece of legislation for veterans.

But while the Legion's bill resembled the administration's plans in its basic components, in critical regards it differed, and was significantly more inclusive and generous. Whereas the administration's version entitled veterans to one year of education and permitted only a small percentage with "exceptional ability and skill" to receive additional training, contingent on passage of competitive examinations, the Legion-inspired bill, by contrast, offered up to four years of funding to any veteran whose education had been interrupted.⁹⁸ The administration bill restricted the one year of guaranteed education to those who had served at least six months, while the Legion bill offered educational benefits for all who had served for at least ninety days. The administration's bill would have complicated matters further, specifying that the "number of persons selected for a further period of instruction shall, as nearly as the conditions of good administration may permit, be apportioned among the several States principally upon the basis of

the number of persons supplied the armed forces by each State." Such restrictions were unnecessary in the Legion bill.⁹⁹

Throughout their work in creating the G.I. Bill, Legion leaders pushed consistently for the most generous and inclusive version of policy permissible. Harry Colmery's personal notes and his testimony before congressional committees suggest that time and again he fought off efforts to restrict eligibility.¹⁰⁰ He told the Committee on World War Veterans' Legislation, chaired by John E. Rankin (Miss.):

The [Legion] bill has some things in it, of course, that have been taken from the Thomas bill. But . . . we did not go along with the idea of putting an additional 3 years on a competitive basis and apportioning it throughout the State on some basis of mathematical calculation or on any basis of selection. On the contrary, we wrote in here . . . to remove any doubt that if the work was satisfactory there is no limitation . . . the veteran shall be eligible and entitled to continue his course of education or training until he has completed the same.¹⁰¹

Besides their general inclination to get the best deal possible for veterans, Legion officials were likely influenced by another legislative proposal being considered in congressional hearings at the very time they met in Washington to plan their bill. Senator Claude Pepper (D.-Fla.) was promoting S. 1295, a bill that provided four years of educational loans for any veteran who wished to continue his education. Pepper lambasted the administration's bill as elitist as he questioned how decisions would be made about which veterans could be educated beyond one year:

While I understand thoroughly what the Germans have always done about segregating those who are qualified for higher education from the masses who are destined for manual work and that sort of thing, at the same time it looks to me like any boy or girl who wants to go to college and who is able to make creditable grades, if they go there, should be entitled to go without some board somewhere getting this fellow into a laboratory, as it were, and deciding what potentialities are within him.¹⁰²

The Legion Bill mirrored Pepper's own bill in promising up to four years of education for each veteran, but it went a step further by offering full sponsorship of tuition, rather than only loans.

The crowning touch on the bill was its appealing name, the "G.I. Bill of Rights," given to it by the Legion's acting director of public relations,

Jack Cejnar. The bill was introduced in Congress when it reconvened after its holiday recess in January. In the Senate, it was sponsored by Joel Bennett Clark from Missouri, one of the founders of the American Legion, and hearings were held immediately.

During the first six months of 1944, the American Legion mobilized an enormous grassroots and public relations effort to marshal support for the G.I. Bill. Newspaper tycoon William Randolph Hearst, acting on his personal interest in veterans' welfare, offered the Legion the assistance of three of his top reporters for the duration of the legislative battles. Besides writing feature articles, the trio canvassed members of Congress as to their positions on the bill and rallied grassroots pressure on those expressing indecision or opposition. The national organization mailed packets to all local posts offering them materials to help their members write letters to Congress, appear on radio talk shows in support of the legislation, organize petition drives, and encourage local journalists to write articles about the legislation. The Women's Auxiliary for the Legion joined in all such efforts. The national staff prepared a motion picture clip and sent it to local theaters around the country, and they barraged members of Congress with telegrams. The G.I. Bill quickly enjoyed far more widespread support than the Roosevelt administration's plans for veterans had ever garnered.¹⁰³

By striking contrast to the chilly reception with which the press greeted NRPB reports, the G.I. Bill received glowing praise in newspapers all over the nation. From the *Post-Intelligencer* in Seattle, Washington, to the *Journal* of Augusta, Maine, from the *Independent* of St. Petersburg, Florida, and the *News-Tribune* of Duluth, Minnesota, to the *News Press* of Santa Barbara, California, editorials urged swift passage of the legislation. While the NRPB proposals had been regarded as "socialist," the G.I. Bill was called "sensible," "fair," and based on "sound principles." Of course, the bill targeted veterans only, not all citizens, and this likely explains much of the difference in the reception of the proposals. Nonetheless, the reputation of the messenger—the American Legion—no doubt also accounted for some of the difference in perceptions. Newspapers around the country echoed the sentiments of the Leitchfield, Kentucky, *Gazette*: "Because of its experience in dealing with the affairs of veterans, the American Legion is the only group in the United States which really know[s] how to prepare such a bill." Commentators also stressed that unlike plans for veterans of previous wars, the G.I. Bill "is rightly seeking to help [veterans] help themselves" through education and employment aids.¹⁰⁴

Some veterans' groups expressed misgivings about the Legion's approach, given its unconventional departure from privileging disabled

veterans above all. Representatives of the VFW, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Disabled American Veterans, and Regular Veterans Association wrote an open letter to Senator Clark questioning the wisdom of the legislation, particularly of the educational provisions.

Our nation's first responsibility should be to those who have suffered physical and/or mental handicap by reason of military or naval service. Any legislation which grants entitlement to four years of college training at government expense to any able-bodied veteran who had ninety days service should be carefully examined in the light of our tremendous war debt and the ability of the nation adequately to care for its war disabled.¹⁰⁵

The DAV itself expressed outright opposition to the plan.¹⁰⁶ Nonetheless, the Senate approved the bill quickly by a 50-0 vote.

Other forms of opposition emerged in the House.¹⁰⁷ Chairman Rankin argued that the educational components of the bill would allow federal authorities to intervene in the segregated institutions of the South.¹⁰⁸ Some members worried about the cost of the unemployment provisions. Still, the committee reported out the bill and on May 18 the House approved, 387-0, a version of the bill that blended elements of the Thomas proposal with those of the Legion's proposal from Senator Clark's committee.

Gridlock emerged once more in the conference committee. Once again Congressman Rankin insisted that the G.I. Bill would undermine the availability of low-wage black labor in the South. Opposing the unemployment insurance component of the legislation, he charged that "We have 50,000 negroes in the service from our State, and in my opinion, if the bill should pass in its present form, a vast majority of them would remain unemployed for at least a year."¹⁰⁹ In a dramatic eleventh-hour series of events, Legion officials, assisted by political leaders, managed to contact Congressman John Gibson, who was traveling in Georgia, and fly him to Washington in time to break the deadlock at the committee's final meeting.¹¹⁰ The conference version was approved by both houses on June 13; on June 22, President Roosevelt signed the new bill into law.¹¹¹

The law, as enacted, offered educational and training benefits in their most generous form. All veterans who had an "other than dishonorable discharge," had served for at least ninety days, and whose military service began before they turned twenty-five, were offered one year of such benefits.¹¹² The legislation extended additional education to those who had served longer: they could receive an additional year for each year

in the service up to a total of four years of education. All fees, tuition, books, and supplies would be paid up to a maximum of \$500 per year per veteran, and the subsistence allowances of \$50 per month for single veterans and \$75 for married veterans were adopted.¹¹³

Melding Civic Visions

At first blush, the enactment of the G.I. Bill might be considered a simple perpetuation of the tradition begun in the United States much earlier: developing the welfare state through warfare, by extending benefits primarily to citizen-soldiers. The G.I. Bill differed from Civil War pensions and other precedents, however, because it incorporated important new features inherited from the New Deal vision of social citizenship. First, while earlier pension schemes had been distributive in nature, permitting a high degree of discretion to politicians who could in practice control the timing and targeting of benefits for political purposes, the G.I. Bill bore greater resemblance to a redistributive policy.¹¹⁴ Although the target group was still limited to veterans rather than applying more broadly to all Americans, nonetheless those who were covered were truly endowed with a social bill of rights, fixed and clear in statutory form, rather than contingent upon subsequent appropriations for pensions. Second, the G.I. Bill offered more inclusive rights than earlier pensions inasmuch as any veteran who had served for ninety days could receive one year of education. Earlier educational programs for veterans had been limited to those who were disabled, and earlier pensions had been tied to both length of service and financial need.¹¹⁵ Other veterans' organizations would have preferred to give World War II veterans targeted benefits, more rigidly tied to such criteria, in accordance with that tradition. The Legion, by contrast, promoted benefits for all veterans, ironically emanating the more all-encompassing spirit that had been associated previously with the NRPB. And these benefits would be made available to approximately 15 million returning veterans, including the vast majority of men of that generation who had been born in the late teens and early twenties, had grown up during the Depression, and had served in the war. Coupling such inclusive eligibility criteria with such a large pool of potential beneficiaries, the G.I. Bill offered men of the World War II generation relatively broad access to education as a social right.

Aspects of this achievement of far-reaching and generous legislation were certainly paradoxical. First, though progressive state builders lost prominence in the early 1940s, the policy alternative that called for less spending became discredited as fascist, socialist, or totalitarian,

whereas the policy that demanded greater government spending succeeded. Second, the alternative planned by those with the command of state resources and technical skills failed, whereas the one that was crafted by a grassroots organization prevailed. This combination succeeded, however, given the public's broad support for schooling for returning veterans and the Legion's legitimacy and hard work in promoting its alternative as the appropriate policy choice.

Contemporary policymakers might find lessons here about how generous social programs can be adopted in the United States, even in a divided political climate. Through the exigencies of political struggle, policymakers and organizational leaders who created the G.I. Bill successfully wedded two conceptions of citizenship. The law represented the union of the progressive hopes of New Deal reformers for expanded social citizenship with the zealous aspirations of the American Legion to give veterans their due for their exemplary participatory citizenship in military service and to enable them to be active citizens in new ways during peacetime. The American Legion's emphasis on the value of participatory obligations to the polity thus provided the means by which progressives' dreams for generous social rights and broad access could be rescued, albeit in a more narrowly targeted form than they had hoped. The emphasis on both recognizing and enabling citizens' obligations to participate in democracy made possible the expansion of social benefits in a broad, generous, and rights-oriented manner.

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Notes

1. Michael J. Bennett, *When Dreams Come True: The GI Bill and the Making of Modern America* (Washington, D.C., 1996); Milton Greenberg, *The G.I. Bill: The Law That Changed America* (New York, 1997); Reginald Wilson, "GI Bill Expands Access for African Americans," *Educational Record* 75 (Fall 1994): 32-39.

2. U.S. President's Commission on Veterans' Pensions, *Veterans' Benefits in the United States: Findings and Recommendations* (Washington, D.C., 1956), 287, 301.

3. Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York, 2003), 156-60; Margot Canaday, "Building a Straight State: Sexuality and Social Citizenship Under the 1944 G.I. Bill," *Journal of American History* 90 (December 2003). <<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/jah/90.3/canaday.html>> (26 July 2004), para. 4.

4. Edwin Amenta and Theda Skocpol, "Redefining the New Deal: World War II and the Development of Social Provision in the United States," in *The Politics of Social Policy in the United States*, ed. Margaret Weir, Ann Shola Orloff, and Theda Skocpol (Princeton, 1988), 81-122; Ira Katznelson and Bruce Pietykowski, "Rebuilding the American State: Evidence from the 1940s," *Studies in American Political Development* 5 (Fall 1991): 301-39; see also Michael K. Brown, "State Capacity and Political Choice:

Interpreting the Failure of the Third New Deal," *Studies in American Political Development* 9 (Spring 1995): 187–212; Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform* (New York, 1995).

5. David Brody, "The New Deal and World War II," in *The New Deal: The National Level*, ed. John Braeman, Robert H. Bremner, and David Brody (Columbus, 1975), 1:267–309; Richard Polenberg, *War and Society: The United States, 1941–1945* (Philadelphia, 1972), 73–98.

6. Ira Katznelson, Kim Geiger, and Daniel Kryder, "Limiting Liberalism: The Southern Veto in Congress, 1933–1950," *Political Science Quarterly* 108 (Summer 1993): 283–306; James T. Patterson, *Congressional Conservatism and the New Deal* (Lexington, Ky., 1967).

7. Jerome S. Bruner, *Mandate from the People* (New York, 1944), 210–22.

8. This analysis builds on the foundational accounts, both Davis R. B. Ross, *Preparing for Ulysses: Politics and Veterans During World War II* (New York, 1969), and Keith W. Olson, *The G.I. Bill, the Veterans, and the Colleges* (Lexington, Ky., 1974).

9. Theda Skocpol, "The G.I. Bill and U.S. Social Policy, Past and Future," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 14 (Summer 1997).

10. David Camelon, "I Saw the G.I. Bill Written," *American Legion Magazine* 47 (October 1949): 52; Raymond Moley Jr., *The American Legion Story* (New York, 1966), p. 270.

11. T. H. Marshall, "Citizenship and Social Class," in *Class, Citizenship, and Social Development* (New York, 1965), 65–122; see also Judith N. Shklar, *American Citizenship: The Quest for Inclusion* (Cambridge, Mass., 1991).

12. Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge, Mass., 1992), 102–51.

13. Peter Karsten, "The U.S. Citizens Soldier's Past, Present, and Likely Future," *Parameters* (Summer 2001): 61–73; R. Claire Snyder, *Citizen-Soldiers and Manly Warriors: Military Service and Gender in the Civic Republican Tradition* (Lanham, Md., 1999). For an original defense of this idea from the revolutionary era, see George Washington, "Sentiments of a Peace Establishment," *The American Military: Readings in the History of the Military and American Society*, ed. Russell Weigley (Reading, Mass., 1969); James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers*, ed. Isaac Kramnick (first published 1788; London: Penguin Books, 1987), see nos. 24–29, esp. 29.

14. Kenneth T. Kato, "Veterans' Benefits: An Overview," in *The Encyclopedia of the United State Congress*, ed. Donald C. Bacon, Roger H. Davidson, and Morton Keller, vol. 4 (New York, 1994), 2037–40.

15. Theodore J. Lowi, "American Business, Public Policy, Case Studies, and Political Theory," *World Politics* 6 (1964): 677–715.

16. Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, 143–48.

17. Kato, "Veterans' Benefits," 2038–39.

18. William Pyrlle Dillingham, *Federal Aid to Veterans, 1917–1941* (Gainesville, Fla., 1952), 131–44.

19. U.S. Congress, *Proceedings of the 15th National Convention of the American Legion, Chicago, Illinois, October 2–5, 1933*, House Document No. 154, 73th Cong., 2d sess. (Washington, D.C., 1934), 16; emphasis mine.

20. Kato, "Veterans' Benefits," 2039; William E. Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, 1932–1940* (New York, 1963), 147, 171.

21. Gary Dean Best, *FDR and the Bonus Marchers, 1933–1935* (Westport, Conn., 1992).

22. Suzanne Mettler, *Dividing Citizens: Gender and Federalism in New Deal Public Policy* (Ithaca, 1998).

23. Franklin D. Roosevelt, "The Annual Message to Congress, January 6, 1941," in *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, ed. Samuel I. Rosenman (New York, 1941), 1940 vol., 672.

24. *Ibid.*

25. The agency was built on the foundation of the National Resources Board and the subsequent National Resources Committee. See Arthur M. Schlesinger, *The Coming of the New Deal* (Boston, 1959), 350–52; Patrick D. Reagan, *Designing a New America: The Origins of New Deal Planning, 1890–1943* (Amherst, 1999), on postwar planning, see esp. chap. 8; Philip W. Warken, *A History of the National Resources Planning Board, 1933–1943* (New York, 1979).

26. Peri E. Arnold, *Making the Managerial Presidency: Comprehensive Reorganization Planning, 1905–1980* (Princeton, 1986), 91.

27. U.S. National Resources Planning Board (hereafter NRPB), Memorandum for the President, 14 March 1941, Official File of the President (hereafter OF) 1092, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library (hereafter FDR), Hyde Park, N.Y., NRPB, Box 4, pp. 1–2, emphasis mine.

28. NRPB, “Draft Message to Congress,” 23 July 1941, OF 1092, FDR, NRPB, Box 4, p. 5. This message was transmitted to Congress on 14 January 1942, when the president submitted the NRPB’s report, “Development of National Resources—Report for 1942.” See *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, ed. Rosenman, 1942 vol. 54, emphasis mine.

29. Officials on the NRPB’s who crafted the proposal included Chair William Haber, a liberal economist from the University of Michigan; Katharine Lenroot, Chief of the Childrens’ Bureau, who had been one of the officials who designed Aid to Dependent Children in 1935; and Research Director Eveline Burns, an economics professor from Columbia University. Letter, Frederic Delano and others to Franklin D. Roosevelt, 4 December 1941, OF 1092, FDR, NRPB Reports, 1942–43, Box 15. Burns had studied with Sir William Beveridge when she was a student at the London School of Economics, and her thinking about social policy resembled his. Brinkley, *End of Reform*, 253. On Burns generally, see Linda R. Wolf Jones, *Eveline M. Burns and the American Social Security System, 1935–1960* (New York, 1991), 27–33. While the report became known as the American Beveridge Report, Burns argued that the NRPB report was superior to the British counterpart because it paired objectives like “freedom from want” with “specific proposals for assurance of work.” Eveline M. Burns, “Comparison of the NRPB Report with the Beveridge Report,” 26 December 1942, NRPB, Records of the Office of the Director, Records of the Post-war Agenda Sections, Box 4, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (hereafter NA), Record Group (RG) 187, p. 1.

30. NRPB, *Security, Work, and Relief Policies* (Washington, D.C., 1942), 489.

31. NRPB, *Security, Work and Relief Policies*, 3.

32. See also Ross, *Preparing for Ulysses*, 68–69.

33. NRPB, “Draft Message to Congress,” 6.

34. NRPB, *National Resources Development: Report for 1943; Part I. Post War Plan and Program* (Washington, D.C., 1943), 2.

35. *Ibid.*, 68.

36. NRPB, *Security, Work and Relief Policies*, 492–93.

37. Memorandum, Frederic A. Delano to Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1 July 1942, OF 1092, FDR, Box 16, File 1092d.

38. Memorandum, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Frederic A. Delano, 6 July 1942, OF 1092, FDR, Box 16, File 1092d.

39. The American Council on Education maintained close ties with Reeves, offering advice in the course of PMC proceedings. Letter, George F. Zook to Marvin H. McIntyre, 16 November 1942, OF 5182, “Armed Forces Committee on Postwar Educational Opportunities for Service Personnel, 1942–44,” FDR.

40. Reeves persuaded the president that the committee should investigate needs in other areas of adult education as well. Carl Thomas Pacacha, “Floyd Wesley Reeves: Pioneer in Shaping Federal Legislation in Support of Adult Education” (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 1970). The legislation that emerged from the report, the Federal Aid to Education Act of 1939, would have given the federal government a consid-

erably larger role in education policy, and on those grounds it was defeated in the increasingly conservative Congress. Report on the Advisory Committee on Education, Message from the President of the United States, 75th Cong., 3d sess., House document no. 529 (Washington, D.C., 1938); U.S. Congress, Senate, Federal Aid to Education Act of 1939, Hearings Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Education and Labor, 76th Cong., 1st sess., 2, 3, and 10 March 1939.

41. Mary Ann Diller, "Individual and Social Benefits of Federally Supported Continuing Education: An Effort to Assess, Over a Quarter Century and Within a Mid-American Community, Impact of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act (G.I. Bill) upon Individuals, Their Families, and Their Community" (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 1973).

42. At the time, Brown was serving as education adviser to the Joint Army-Navy Committee on Welfare and Recreation, and as secretary to the Committee on Military Affairs for the American Council on Education. Spaulding was chief, Education Branch, Special Service Division of the War Department and Report, "Demobilization and Readjustment Report of the Conference on Postwar Readjustment of Civilian and Military Personnel," OF 1092, FDR, NRPB, "Conference on Postwar Readjustment of Civilian and Military Personnel (hereafter PMC)," Box 16, File 1092d, pp. 1-2; Francis J. Brown, *Educational Opportunities for Veterans* (Washington, D.C., 1946); Olson, *The G.I. Bill, the Veterans, and the Colleges*, 6.

43. "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Committee on the Relationships of Higher Education to the Federal Government," 11 April 1944; also Letter, Edmund E. Day to the Honorable John E. Rankin, no date, both in Records of the American Council on Education, Box no. 27, Folder marked "Committee on Relationship of Higher Education to Federal Government," no. 4, Hoover Institution Library and Archives, Stanford University, Palo Alto; U.S. Congress, Senate, Hearings Before the Committee on Education and Labor on S. 1295 and S. 1509, 78th Cong., 1st sess., 13, 14, and 15 December, 115.

44. This would become most evident later in congressional hearings, when members of the PMC and later of the Osborn Committee defended their more restrictive approach to benefits. See testimony by Colonel Francis T. Spaulding, U.S. Congress, Senate, Hearings Before the Committee on Education and Labor on S. 1295 and S. 1509, 13, 14, and 15 December 1943, 32, 36.

45. "Suggested Agenda for July 17 Meeting of the Conference on Post-war Readjustments of Civilian and Military Personnel," NRPB, Central Office Records, Central Office Classified Correspondence and Related Records, 1931-43, File 830.1, RG 187, NA.

46. Minutes, PMC Meeting, 17 July 1942, NRPB, Central Office Records, File 830.1, pp. 2, 8, RG 187, NA.

47. Mettler, *Dividing Citizens*, 57-58, 121-22, 124.

48. Report to Conference on PMC, "The Wisconsin Educational Bonus Law of 1919," NRPB, Central Office Records, File 830.1, quote on 4; see also 1.

49. *Ibid.*, 2-3.

50. Olson, *The G.I. Bill, the Veterans, and the Colleges*, 7-8.

51. Minutes, PMC Meeting, 27 August 1942, NRPB, Central Office Records, File 830.1, pp. 6-10, RG 187, NA.

52. NRPB, "The Role of Organized Education in Post-war Occupational Adjustment," NRPB, Central Office Records, File 830.1, RG 187, NA.

53. Memorandum and attachments, Leonard Outhwaite to PMC, 13 February 1943, NRPB, Records of the Office of the Director, Records of the Post War Agenda Section, "Box 4," file on "Reeves Committee," 11.

54. *Ibid.*, 8-9.

55. NRPB, Records of the Office of the Director, Post War Agenda Section, Box 4, untitled document in file entitled "Reeves Committee, cont.," 11-12, RG 187, NA.

56. PMC, "Demobilization and Readjustment" (Washington, D.C., June 1943); Franklin D. Roosevelt, "The Nine Hundred and Twelfth Press Conference," 30 July 1943, in *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt* ed. Rosenman, 1943 vol., 341-44; quotations on 344.
57. Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Fireside Chat on the Progress of the War and Plans for Peace," 28 July 1943, *Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt* ed. Rosenman, 1943 vol., 334.
58. Bruner, *Mandate from the People*, 159-64.
59. *Ibid.*, 210-17.
60. Letter, L. B. Parker to Congressman Harry Shepard, 11 March 1943, OF 4351, "Postwar Problems," Box 3, FDR.
61. Letter, Harry Morse to Franklin D. Roosevelt, 10 March 1943, OF 4351, "Postwar Problems," Box 2, FDR.
62. Letter, Eddy N. Ekdahl to Franklin D. Roosevelt, 24 December 1943, OF 4351, "Postwar Problems," Box 3, FDR.
63. Letter, Ray E. Nix to President Roosevelt, 16 March 1943; also Letter (illegible signature) to Mr. President, 7 June 1943; both in OF 4351, "Postwar Problems," Box 2, FDR.
64. "Editorial Reaction to NRPB Reports," 089, Entry 8, Box 136, RG 187, NA.
65. "Press and Radio Reactions to NRPB's postwar reports form OWI's *Weekly Media Report*," 25 March 1943, NRPB, Office of the Director, Postwar Planning Section, Box 1, "Climate of Opinion," RG 187, NA.
66. Letter and attachments, George B. Chandler to Franklin D. Roosevelt, 2 July 1943, OF 4351, "Postwar Problems," Box 2, FDR.
67. Letter, William D. Taylor to Franklin D. Roosevelt, 18 March 1943, OF 4351, "Postwar Problems," Box 2, FDR.
68. Ross, *Preparing for Ulysses*, 63.
69. Olson, *The G.I. Bill, the Veterans, and the Colleges*, 9-10.
70. Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Statement of Signing the Bill Reducing the Draft Age," 13 November 1942, in *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, ed. Rosenman, 1942 vol., 470.
71. George A. Flynn, *The Draft, 1940-1973* (Lawrence, Kan., 1993), 71-72.
72. Members included Rufus C. Harris, president of Tulane University; Young B. Smith, dean of Columbia University Law School; and John W. Studebaker, United States Commissioner of Education. Former PMC members included Spaulding, Sentman, and Reeves. Letter, Franklin D. Roosevelt to General Osborn, 19 November 1942, and Letter, F. H. Osborn to Franklin D. Roosevelt, 20 September 1944, both in OF 5182, "Armed Forces Committee on Postwar Educational Opportunities for Service Personnel, 1942-1944," FDR; Olson, *The G.I. Bill, the Veterans, and the Colleges*, 11.
73. Letter, F. H. Osborn to Franklin D. Roosevelt, 30 July 1945, OF 5182, "Armed Forces Committee on Postwar Educational Opportunities for Service Personnel, 1942-1944," FDR.
74. "Preliminary Report to the President of the United States from the Armed Forces Committee on Postwar Educational Opportunities for Service Personnel," 30 July 1945, OF 5182, "Armed Forces Committee on Postwar Educational Opportunities for Service Personnel, 1942-1944," FDR, 17-18.
75. *Ibid.*, 11, 14, 15.
76. Memorandum, Frank T. Hines to the President, 6 August 1943, OF 4675m, "World War II Veterans' Bonus," Box 28, FDR.
77. William Pencak, "Veterans' Movements," *Encyclopedia of American Political History: Studies of the Principal Movements and Ideas*, ed. Jack P. Greene (New York, 1984), 3:1341.
78. Memorandum, Frank T. Hines to the President, 6 August 1943.
79. Oscar Cox, as quoted in Olson, *The G.I. Bill, the Veterans, and the Colleges*, 12.

80. Ross, *Preparing for Ulysses*, 73. In mid-October, the American Council on Education sent Roosevelt's speechwriter a plan for Veterans' Benefits that had been drafted by its Committee on Relationships of Higher Education to the Federal Government, a group of prominent educators who had met throughout the summer. Not surprisingly, since ACE leaders had been involved in both of the Roosevelt administration groups that examined the issue, the organization's plan closely resembled that of the PMC and Osborn Committee. Olson, *The G.I. Bill, the Veterans, and the Colleges*, 14.

81. Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Message to the Congress on Education of War Veterans," *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, ed. Rosenman, 1943 vol., 450.

82. *Ibid.*, 451.

83. *Ibid.*

84. Ross, *Preparing for Ulysses*, 93.

85. Official Legion accounts include those by David Camelon, "I Saw the G.I. Bill Written," *American Legion Magazine* 47 (September–November 1949), parts 1–3; and Raymond Moley Jr., *The American Legion Story* (New York, 1966).

86. Skocpol, "The G.I. Bill and U.S. Social Policy, Past and Future."

87. Camelon, "I Saw the G.I. Bill Written," *American Legion Magazine* 47, part 1 (September 1949): 47.

88. U.S. Congress, *Proceedings of the 25th National Convention of the American Legion, Omaha, Nebraska, September 21–23, 1943*, House Document No. 364, 78th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C., 1944), 102–3.

89. "Some G.I. Bill Authors Today," *American Legion Magazine* (May 1969): 33.

90. U.S. Congress, *Proceedings of the 25th National Convention of the American Legion*, 106.

91. Pencak, "Veterans' Movements," 3:1338–40.

92. Original notes by Harry W. Colmery, "U.S.—Manpower Benefits," G.I. Bill Correspondence, National Headquarters of the American Legion, Indianapolis (hereafter "AL").

93. U.S. Congress, *Proceedings of the 25th National Convention of the American Legion*, 133.

94. U.S. Congress, Senate, 78th Cong., 2d sess., Hearings Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Finance on S. 1617, 14 January–10 March 1944 (Washington, D.C., 1944), 253.

95. Moley, *The American Legion Story*, 273.

96. U.S. Congress, Senate, Hearings Before the Committee on Education and Labor on S. 1295 and S. 1509, 78th Cong., 1st sess., 13, 14, and 15 December; Memo, James F. Burton to Bob Pitkin, 5 May 1949, AL folder no. 10, AL.

97. Camelon, "I Saw the G.I. Bill Written," October 1949, 52.

98. Olson, *The G.I. Bill, the Veterans, and the Colleges*, 16–17.

99. U.S. Congress, Senate, Hearings Before the Committee on Education and Labor on S. 1295 and S. 1509, 78th Cong., 1st sess., 13, 14, and 15 December, 15.

100. Memo in Harry Colmery's handwriting, from Mayflower Hotel room, "G.I. Bill" cabinet, AL; U.S. Congress, Senate, 78th Cong., 2d sess., Hearings Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Finance on S. 1617, 14 January–10 March 1944, 252–53;

101. U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, 78th Cong., 2d sess., Hearings Before the Committee on World War Veterans' Legislation on H.R. 3917 and S. 1767, 11 January–31 March 1944, 421.

102. U.S. Congress, Senate, Hearings Before the Committee on Education and Labor on S. 1295 and S. 1509, 78th Cong., 1st sess., 13, 14, and 15 December, 23.

103. "Publicity Outline Supporting Legion Bill," folder marked "U.S.—Manpower Benefits—G.I. Bill," G.I. Bill correspondence, AL; all contents of folders no. 2–no. 5, "U.S.—Manpower—Legion Bill," G.I. Bill correspondence, AL; Memo, Jack Cejnar to

Commander Wagner, 22 November 1955, AL no. 11, AL. See also Theda Skocpol, "The G.I. Bill and U.S. Social Policy, Past and Future," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 14 (Summer 1997): 106.

104. "The Editor Speaks," Washington, D.C., May 1944, "U.S.—Manpower Benefits", folder no. 6, G.I. Bill correspondence, AL.

105. Letter, Omar B. Ketchum et al. to Senator Bennett C. Clark, 16 February 1944, AL.

106. "G.I. Bill of Rights Does More Harm than Good, DAV Official Asserts," *Rocky Mountain News*, 12 September 1944, 5; Letter, Millard W. Rice to Honorable Walter F. George, Chairman, Committee on Finance, U.S. Senate, 22 February 1944, G.I. Bill correspondence, "U.S.—Manpower—Legion Bill," folder no. 2, AL.

107. For a careful treatment of these events, see Ross, *Preparing for Ulysses*, 105–17.

108. U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, 78th Cong., 2d sess., Hearings Before the Committee on World War Veterans' Legislation on H.R. 3917 and S. 1767, 11 January–31 March 1944, 350–52; "G.I. Enemy No. 1," *Nation* (6 May 1944): 527–28.

109. Quoted in Ross, *Preparing for Ulysses*, 108.

110. Camelon, "I Saw the G.I. Bill Written," *American Legion Magazine* (November 1949), part 3, 47–48.

111. Olson, *The G.I. Bill, the Veterans, and the Colleges*, 16–17.

112. Discharges were of three types: "honorable," "dishonorable," and "blue discharges." The latter were issued because of "undesirable habits or traits of character," such as "psychopathic personality, . . . criminalism, chronic alcoholism, drug addiction, pathological lying, or homosexuality," U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, 79th Cong., 2d sess., "Investigations of the National War Effort," Report issued by the Committee on Military Affairs, 30 January 1946, 2. Such individuals were meant to be included in the provisions of the G.I. Bill. For more thorough treatment, see Canaday, "Building a Straight State."

113. Olson, *The G.I. Bill, the Veterans, and the Colleges*, 17.

114. These policy categories appear in Theodore J. Lowi, "American Business, Public Policy, Case Studies, and Political Theory," *World Politics* 6 (1964): 677–715. For a discussion of their relationship to citizenship, see Suzanne Mettler, "Social Citizens of Separate Sovereignities: Governance in the New Deal Welfare State," in *The New Deal and the Triumph of Liberalism*, ed. Sidney M. Milkis and Jerome M. Mileur (Amherst, 2002), 231–71.

115. Kato, "Veterans' Benefits," 2037–38.