

THE 4-1-1: TALKING POINTS

How to talk about the EARNED Act in a hallway, at a post meeting, or across a counter.

WHAT TO CALL IT

The EARNED Act. If people need more: "It would recognize the bachelor's degree veterans earn through their service."

10 SECONDS

"I'm working on the EARNED Act. Serve four years with an honorable discharge, and you've earned a bachelor's degree. Some earned it in a classroom; they earned it in uniform."

30 SECONDS

" [Your connection: I'm a Marine veteran / My husband served / My son is a soldier.] Veterans lead people and run operations under pressure, and they still get screened out of jobs for lacking a bachelor's degree. Four years of training, responsibility and sacrifice rarely count on a job application.

The EARNED Act would fix that: serve an honorable four-year enlistment, leave with a Bachelor of Arts in Defense of Freedom, and keep your GI Bill for what comes next. The Air Force already recognizes enlisted airmen's training with an associate degree. Every branch should, at the bachelor's level. Would you support that?"

THE HEART OF IT

"Service and college are different paths to higher learning, and both should open the same doors. They earned it, and we owe our service members that equal recognition."

WHICH SLOGAN FOR WHOM

AUDIENCE	SLOGAN
Everyone (letters, email signature, closing)	Some earned it in a classroom. They earned it in uniform.
Veterans	Graduated under fire.
Officials and press	The 4-1-1: Four years served. One nation defended. One degree earned.
Business owners	Tested where it counts.
Signs, social posts, visuals	The world was their campus.

OPENERS BY AUDIENCE

- **Veterans:** "Did your service ever count for anything on a job application?" Then let them talk. Most have a story.
- **Business owners:** "You'd hire someone who led a team under pressure for four years, right? Would you count military service as equivalent experience?"
- **Officials:** lead with the local ask. "Our city could name military service as qualifying experience in its job postings." Then mention the federal proposal.

WHEN SOMEONE PUSHES BACK

- **"Isn't college different?"** "College is one way to learn. Service is another, and it's more structured and tested than people think. Four years of full-time duty is more documented hours of training and work than a bachelor's requires, and accreditors' own standards allow 'the equivalent.' No added classes needed. The side-by-side is at earnedact.org/standard."
- **"Won't that cheapen degrees?"** "The service academies already confer a bachelor's degree after four years in the military. This shows the enlisted the same respect."
- **"Academy cadets had to compete to get in."** "Enlisted members are selected and tested too, and many don't make it through training. The real question is whether four years of documented training and responsibility counts as learning, and the American Council on Education already evaluates it for college credit."
- **"What will it cost?"** "The expensive part already exists. The training, evaluations and transcripts are paid for, and the Air Force's community college already uses military training records to award accredited degrees. This extends a working system."
- **"Is that realistic?"** "The Air Force has turned training into accredited associate degrees since 1977. Cities can act now, and Congress passes a defense bill every year that this can ride on."

ALWAYS END WITH AN ASK

"Can I send you the proposal?" · "Would your post sign on?" · "Will you add your name at earnedact.org?"

A nonpartisan citizen proposal started in Surprise, Arizona. Not affiliated with the Department of Defense or any branch of service.