

VFW Rights VA Overpayment Error

VFW's 1 Student Veteran rep helps clear student veteran of wrongful \$32,000 debt

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After eight years of honorable service in the California Army National Guard, Sgt. Steve Chang applied for veteran education benefits in July 2010.

“[Chang] operated in good faith and relied on the VA to properly decide on the payments that were due for those school terms,” said George Burke, Associate Director of Field Operations at the VFW. Chang used the benefits to complete two degrees.

“Then, long after Chang was finished with his education, someone at VA discovered an administrative error on their part, and sent an overpayment notice letter for more than \$32,000.”

Chang was "shocked and overwhelmed." He put in a debt waiver request, but was denied.

He then reached out to veteran friends, and did research on veterans' service organizations to see if they could provide any outside assistance. His search led him to the VFW, and the 1 Student Veteran program.

“I received the email, and I saw [Chang] had already tried to correct the problem but was denied,” Burke said. Fortunately, we’ve seen cases like this before and we were able to work with our contacts in VA to make it right.”

Chang called the VA Education Benefits department in August, and was told he had been cleared of all debt. He was even repaid the full amount that had been withheld from his

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disability benefits.

“I would like to give my sincerest thanks to you and your team for helping me solve this issue and fighting for my cause,” Chang said in an email to Burke.

“Without your efforts, I would still be mired in the appeals process and be over \$32,000 in debt. The proverbial 'weight' on my shoulders is now gone.”

Burke said, “If a veteran is having an issue with any of their VA benefits, including the GI Bill, they need to get a hold of the VFW. We’re here to help ... for me, there’s nothing better than seeing a veteran have that sigh of relief.”

Learn more about the [VFW’s 1 Student Veteran](#) program, and its [National Veterans Service \(NVS\)](#) program.