

Support for Cecil Newsom's supplemental claim for VA educational benefits

Letter of support from: 3-1-23

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Dear VA Supplemental Claim review committee members,

I am writing this letter in support of Cecil Newsom's supplemental claim to have his VA spousal educational benefits reinstated or extended.

Shortly before the pandemic in 2021, Cecil Newsom asked me if my business could provide him with on-the-job training as an auto mechanic and he showed me the paperwork for this educational benefit through the VA. I agreed to train him but then the pandemic delayed the process for a year and a half, approximately.

When we were able to, last January 2022, approximately, my business started the process of hiring Cecil for training. First, I applied for certification for my business to provide this training through Arizona State's requirements. After that was accomplished, Cecil and his wife (the veteran Teresa Allen 9148) called the VA several times. Someone at the VA told Cecil to fill out an online application showing my business would provide the training but we did not learn anything for several weeks. Teresa called the VA to discuss the matter and learned that Cecil's educational benefit had expired. Teresa then wrote to the VA explaining the difficulties Cecil had with this process and explained that Cecil suffers from learning disabilities which explains, in part, his delay in arranging his training opportunity, along with the long interruption caused by the Covid pandemic.

It is my understanding that since Cecil was awarded the benefit perhaps five years before, he has tried at least five times to arrange an on-the-job training position and each time the businesses he approached did not follow through until he came to my business. I have made every effort to set up this training program for Cecil and I implore the VA to reconsider Cecil's application for this benefit and to extend the deadline so that Cecil can take advantage of this training opportunity. Cecil is nearly 60. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for him, perhaps his last chance at learning a trade.