What Shall We Do with Our Boys? An Impact of the GI Bill on the US Economy

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Summary/Abstract: The GI Bill of Rights (The Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944) was a comprehensive program to aid returning veterans in their speedy readjustment to a civilian life. Its role was also to enable the veterans to fit them into the civilian economy. In the first part of the text, the economic and political context of the discussion around the Bill is discussed. The author refers to the popular belief that the end of the war was expected to result in the return of another economic depression. The latter was to be deepened by winding down war production and speeded up by returning servicemen. The text examines how the Bill was to tackle that challenge. The main body of the article is built around the analysis of the provisions of the Act that relate to the benefits for the former soldiers. This includes a mustering-
out pay, education benefits, medical care for the disabled in the war, unemployment insurance, an allowance credit and pensions for disabled veterans. The requirements, terms of funding and sum of benefits are presented and discussed. The last part concludes with the general remarks about the significance of the Bill and its contemporary perception in the USA.
Unfortunately, this doesn't lead us to any solid conclusions. Should we be happy with that number? Student Veterans of America just released a report, the “Million Records Project”, claiming 51.7% of those who did use the GI Bill receive some sort of degree or certificate. Again, same question: is this good or bad? What we often learned was that we didn't even have the ability to measure the impact. Not only that, there is no baseline or control reading off of which we can benchmark. Without this data, it's hard to know what's working, what's not, and why. How is unemployment affected by using the GI Bill? Is this the same across all types of colleges, universities, and other institutions? How are reported earnings affected by using the GI Bill? The GI Bill gave many of our nation's leaders their start, including Presidents Gerald Ford, George H.W. Bush, and former Senators Bob Dole, George McGovern, and Pat Moynihan, to name just a few. Additionally, the GI Bill educated 14 Nobel Prize winners and two dozen Pulitzer Prize winners, including authors Joseph Heller, Norman Mailer, and Frank McCourt. The government's investment in the GI Bill resulted in higher national productivity, consumer spending, and tax revenue. More impressively, every dollar spent on educational benefits for the Greatest Generation added seven dollars to the national economy. A new GI Bill would reenergize the U.S. economy and go a long way toward helping our newest generation of heroes build a better life. You May Force Us to Do Something About This! Expand Immigration. A Bombardment that Would Paralyze Them. A Statue for Our Harbor. Looking Backward. San Francisco's Three Graces. You are here. Home » History Lesson Plans » The Oppen Project » Lesson Plans » Immigration » What Shall We Do With Our Boys? What Shall We Do With Our Boys? (Download full-sized image here.) Creator