

## NATIONAL VETERANS EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION COMMISSION

### TOPIC 1: ECONOMY

The US housing market extended its winning streak into August as Americans continued taking advantage of record-low mortgage rates.

Sales of new homes leaped by 4.8%, to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.01 million units, the Census Bureau announced Thursday. The rate was the highest since 2006 and marked four months of increases. Economists surveyed by Bloomberg had expected the rate to drop last month to 890,000 units.



New homes' median sale price fell from the year-ago period, to \$312,800. The average sale price was \$369,000. July's jump was revised higher, to a 14.7% gain.

The Thursday report also revealed a growing strain in housing supply. The seasonally adjusted estimate of new homes for sale fell to 282,000 from 291,000. The latest reading represented a supply of 3.3 months at the housing market's current rate of sales, the shortest period in data going back to 1963.

The housing market has been one of the few corners of the economy enjoying a V-shaped rebound through the coronavirus pandemic. The Federal Reserve's decision in March to push interest rates close to zero lowered mortgage rates and spurred a pickup in home sales. The central bank's subsequent messaging that rates would stay low for years added fuel to the market resurgence. But some fear that the sharp rally is on its last legs.

"While strong demand and lower mortgage rates are supportive of home sales, the slow recovery and weak labor market pose downside risks that we expect will weigh on home sales in the months ahead," said Nancy Vanden Houten, a researcher at Oxford Economics.

Other indicators have pointed to lasting demand in the sector. Homebuilder optimism reached an all-time high in September, according to the National Association of Home Builders/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index. Sales of existing homes have trended in line with new-unit purchases through the summer as well.

The recent increase in home buying where the average home is around \$369,000 only highlights the importance that The American Legion continues to push for raising the ceiling on VA Home Loans.

***Resolution No. 254: Raise Ceiling on VA Home Loans for Two Legally Married Eligible Veterans***

*[Reported by Ariel De Jesus]*

**HOUSEHOLD****DATA****Table A-5. Employment status of the civilian population 18 years and over by veteran status, period of service, and sex, not seasonally adjusted**

[Numbers in thousands]

Employment status, veteran status, and period of service	Total		Men		Women	
	Aug 2019	Aug 2020	Aug 2019	Aug 2020	Aug 2019	Aug 2020
Unemployed	323	560	289	476	34	84
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>8.2</b>

*The national unemployment rate is 10.2 percent (July 2020). Gulf War II veterans' unemployment rate is 7.0 percent.<sup>i</sup> Currently, the unemployment rate for Gulf War II women veterans is 4.5 percent (Down from 7.9 percent in July).*

In August 2020, the veteran unemployment rate is 6.6%, down from 7.9% last month and 8.6% two months ago. The comparable non-veteran unemployment rate was 8.4% in August and 10.2% in July

**TOPIC 2: CONFERENCE CALLS**

**On Monday September 21, 2020** the National Veterans Employment and Education Division had discussions with HVAC on pending legislation to be passed this session. Also, conversations with VEP on compliance oversight and issues in the VSO community were held.

**On Monday September 21, 2020** the National Veterans Employment and Education Division had a call with RBS Advisory Council Project Manager Woodall. Research on educational oversight and compliance.

**On Tuesday, September 22, 2020** the National Veterans Employment & Education Division worked with Senate Veterans Affairs Staff on HR. 4625, Protect the GI Bill. Discussion of Section 2, Dual Certification of Veterans Benefits, Section 6, Risk Based Surveys, and Section on mandating management of schools out of compliance with 3696 requirements.

**On Tuesday, September 22, 2020** the National Veterans Employment & Education Division had conversations with Congressman Ro Khanna's staff on the outreach bill that allows State approving agencies to perform and be reimbursed for outreach.

**On Wednesday September 23, 2020** the National Veterans Employment and Education Division had a discussion with Directors on Commemoration of the Korean War on October 8, 2020. Talked with HVAC and SVAC staff of place for commemoration and research on limitations imposed by COVID.

**On Wednesday September 23, 2020** the National Veterans Employment and Education Division research on educational oversight in preparation for RBS Advisory Council Meeting. Conversation with Wake Forest University on needed services to veteran students and the impact of COVID on veterans education.

**On Wednesday September 23, 2020** the National Veterans Employment and Education Division spoke with Justin Constantine and Jack Fanous with JobPath. Looked at different ways to collaborate to better serve transitioning servicemembers, veterans, and reservist in obtaining meaningful employment.

**On Thursday, September 24, 2020** the National Veterans Employment & Education Division had a discussion with staff from Representative Trey Hollingsworth's office (IN-09) regarding draft legislation that would potentially increase the federal purchasing threshold from Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Businesses from three to five percent.

**On Thursday, September 24, 2020** the National Veterans Employment & Education Division had discussions with RBS Project Manager on upcoming Advisory Council meeting and preparations for RBS pilot rollout. Attended and participated in the Fourth Annual Risk Based Survey Advisory Council Meeting that was held virtually.

**On Thursday, September 24, 2020** the National Veterans Employment & Education Division Conversations with MO, NE, and WA SAAs on the pending legislation extending benefits for on-line housing payout and challenges faced by SAAs in performing oversight next year.

**On Thursday, September 24, 2020** the National Veterans Employment & Education Division Discussed the screening of schools to determine risk, the risk matrix taxonomy, and challenges faced by SAAs. Also discussed the impact of COVID on the pilot performed this year and early next year.

**On Friday, September 25, 2020** the National Veterans Employment & Education Division Division met with the AI Association, a group of industry leaders advocating for the collaboration necessary to support American economic growth in the AI and Automation Industry. The AI Association has become a discussion leader in high tech manufacturing, job creation and insourcing of the US supply chain as COVID-19 exposed the unintended consequences of foreign dependency on US manufacturing.

**On Friday, September 25, 2020** the National Veterans Employment & Education Division had conversations with VSOs on education oversight and follow up conversation with VA leadership on the same.

**On Saturday, September 26, 2020** the National Veterans Employment & Education Division will be attending the 70<sup>th</sup> Korean War Anniversary Tribute Ceremony in Washington DC. Two Korean War veterans will be honored for their contributions during the War. The President of the National Korean War Monument Foundation and representatives from the South Korean Embassy will be present to present the Korean War Peace Medal.

### **TOPIC 3: TRACKING LEGISLATION**

**GI Bill of Rights Equity Commission Act:** Establish the independent National Commission on GI Bill Equity to identify veterans of World War II who were denied the full effect of their GI Bill benefits because of contemporaneous local, State, and Federal Government policies that discriminated against African Americans.

(Tracked by John Kamin)

Resolution: None on file, presenting for review at Fall NEC.

Status: Currently on hold, has not been introduced

**HR 6800, the Heroes Act:** Allows VA to provide transport and purchase food, shelter, phones, clothing, blankets and toiletry items for homeless veterans; Authorizes VA to set up temporary encampments on the grounds of VA Medical Centers to allow homeless veterans to shelter on VA parking lots temporarily; Allows VA to provide reimbursements to social service providers receiving grants for the costs of services for minor children.

(Tracked by Davy Leghorn)

[Resolution No. 324: Support Funding for Homeless Veterans](#)

**HR 7445:** To amend title 38, United States Code, to expand eligibility for home loans from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to certain members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces.

**This bill was submitted for the July 23, 2020 testimony.**

[Resolution No. 329: Support Home Loan Guaranty Program](#)

**HR 1615:** The American Legion supports legislation that would streamline and improve the verification process for veteran-owned small businesses and veteran-owned small businesses.

[Resolution No. 155: Support Verification Improvements for Veterans' Business](#)

**Passed at the 2016 National Convention.**

(Tracked by Davy Leghorn)

**HR 2224:** To direct the Secretary of Labor to prioritize services to homeless veterans with dependent children in carrying out homeless veterans' reintegration programs and for other purposes.

(Tracked by Ariel De Jesus/John Kamin)

[Resolution No. 326: Support Funding for Additional Housing for Homeless Veterans with Families](#)

**S. 2594:** To amend title 5, United States Code, to modify specific requirements concerning service and retirement for veterans' Preference for federal hiring.

(Tracked by Ariel De Jesus)

[Resolution No. 317: Enforcing Veterans' Preference Hiring Practices in Federal Civil Service](#)

**HR 1196, Jobs for Veterans Act of 2019:** This bill allows an increased work opportunity tax credit for employers who hire veterans who have been certified as discharged or released from active duty in the Armed Forces after September 11, 2001, and who begin working for the employer after December 31, 2019, and before January 1, 2024. This increased credit is in addition to any work opportunity tax credit allowed to a veteran with a service-connected disability.

(Tracked by Ariel De Jesus/John Kamin)

[Resolution No. 354: Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program](#)

**HR 7010, Paycheck Protection Program Flexibility Act of 2020:** This bill significantly changes the terms of the PPP loans to be more advantageous to small businesses. Including more flexibility in applying the loan to other expenses besides payroll and benefits and extending the time frame for expending the loan.

(Tracked by Davy Leghorn)

**HR 4625:** To require education programs to be approved by the VA to abide by the Principles of Excellence to include a ban on deceptive or misleading recruiting, clear information about total costs and program requirements, accommodation for deployments, ensuring a point of contact for veterans, and not being under a punitive action by an accreditor.

(Tracked by John Kamin)

[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality of Servicemember and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#)

**HR 6957:** To direct the Secretaries of Defense and Veterans Affairs to treat a period of full-time National Guard duty, performed in response to the national emergency declared on March 13, 2020, by the President concerning COVID-19, as not shorter than 90 days.

(Tracked by John Kamin)

[Currently studying for appropriate resolution.](#)

**HR 4941 Veteran Employment Transition Act” or the “VET Act”** was sponsored by Representative Andy Kim. The last action on the bill was in the House on 12/02/2019; it was referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity. The bill's goal is to improve the Transition Assistance Program. The bill would allow certain veterans' service organizations to contact veterans regarding benefits and to better inform veterans of employment opportunities. The Service groups would inform veterans of the benefits and employment opportunities with the Federal, State, and local governments. The groups inform veterans of events for in the area.

(Tracked by Ariel De Jesus) [A letter of Support was sent](#)

[Resolution No. 70: Improve Transition Assistance Program](#)

**H.R.7003** is a bill sponsored by Rep. Takano, Mark D-CA-41 and was introduced 05/22/2020. The bill would authorize a pilot program in the Department of Defense to enhance efforts to provide job placement assistance and related employment services directly to members of the National Guard, Reserves, and veterans of the Armed Forces. The last action on the bill was 05/22/2020 and referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

(Tracked by Raymond Lorminey/Ariel De Jesus)

[Resolution No. 81: Transition Assistance Program Employment Workshops for National Guard and Reserve Members](#)

**Coronavirus Emergency Borrower Defense (E-BD) Act:** to require the Department of Education to grant full student loan discharges to three specific emergency categories of defrauded borrowers—specifically borrowers covered by:

- (1) Department of Education findings against Corinthian.
- (2) Department of Education findings against ITT Tech; and
- (3) State attorneys general group discharge applications made before the date of enactment.

(Tracked by John Kamin)

[Resolution No. 82: Preserve Veteran and Servicemember Rights to Gainful Employment and Borrower Defense Protections](#)

**HR 7111: Veterans Economic Recovery Act of 2020:** Require the Secretary of VA to carry out a rapid retraining program that provides eligible veterans up to 12 months of retraining assistance for in-demand occupations. These 12 months of benefits would be equivalent to payments made to students and schools through the Post 9/11 GI Bill.

(Tracked by John Kamin)

**This bill was submitted for the July 23, 2020 testimony.**

**[Resolution No. 316: Support Employment of Veterans in the Public and Private Workforce](#)**

**Homeless Veteran Coronavirus Response Act:** The bill allows VA to use existing funds for a broader range of services; authorizes the Department to collaborate with outside organizations to facilitate shelters on its properties; loosens restrictions on Grant and Per Diem (GPD) payments, and requires VA to ensure veterans participating in VA homeless programs have access to VA telehealth services.

(Tracked by Teresa Lewis)

**[Resolution No. 326: Support Funding for Additional Housing for Homeless Veterans with Families](#)**

**HR 4920, Department of Veterans Affairs Contracting Preference Consistency Act of 2020:** is a bill that would allow AbilityOne companies to keep their preferential treatment at the Department of Veteran Affairs after 2016 with some compromises. The Senate initially sent it back to the House after it was passed for changes. Those changes have been reconciled and the bill cleared its last hurdle before it is sent to the White House.

**Draft Bill:** Home loan benefits for National Guard to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand eligibility for home loans from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to certain members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces.

(Tracked by John Kamin)

**We submitted written testimony for the July 23, 2020 hearing.**

**[Resolution No. 329: Support Home Loan Guaranty Program](#)**

**Draft Bill:** JSF - To amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the scope of procedural rights of members of the uniformed services concerning their employment and reemployment rights, and for other purposes.

(Tracked by Davy Leghorn)

**We submitted written testimony for the July 23, 2020 hearing.**

**Draft Bill:** USERRA Protections for State Active Duty - To amend title 38, United States Code, to extend particular employment and reemployment rights to members of the National Guard who perform State active duty. Submitted written testimony to the Legislative Division.

(Tracked by Ariel De Jesus)

**We submitted written testimony for the July 23, 2020 hearing.**

**[Resolution No. 315: Support Employment and Reemployment Rights of National Guard and Reservists Returning from Deployment](#)**

**Draft Bill:** Veterans Educational Assistance Transparency and Accountability Improvement Act, improves the GI. Bill Comparison Tool and ensures veterans, servicemembers, and their families are better informed when choosing what educational institution is best for them.

**A letter of Support was Sent**

**[Resolution No. 327: Support Further Assessment and Evaluation of Institutions of Higher Learning to Enable Veterans to Make Informed Education Choices](#)**

**Draft Bill: Reducing Veteran Homelessness Act of 2020:** would require VA contract out vacant HUD-VASH case worker positions to local, qualified community providers. and GPD programs so that more homeless veterans can access housing through them.



## TOPIC 4: EMPLOYMENT

The coronavirus pandemic has impacted everyone's life, some more than others. Our veterans are especially struggling during this time, whether it's isolation or a lost job. That's why the VA wants you to know there's a program out there that can help, the Veteran Readiness and Employment



Program. This program can help vets get a job right away or go back to school to get a better job down the road.

"My school is getting paid for. All I have to do is focus on making myself better so I can admit I'm a better member of society," said Pierre-Richard Victor.

Victor applied for VR&E because of the coronavirus. He was living in Virginia at the start of the pandemic, with his two sons. He was stationed there as an Operations Sergeant for United States Army. When his orders were done in July, he was planning to move to Florida to be a flight attendant.

"Going back to my job was not feasible because what was going on with Covid and what's going on with the airline... that wouldn't happen," said Victor. He added, "when Covid happened I think it was wow what do we do? What's going on? It's not easy to change. It's not easy to see further in the future to say this happened, what am I going to do? I have two kids to feed."

As part of VR&E, Victor is going back to school as a business administration student.

"In two years I'll be walking down aisle and it will be an amazing accomplishment. Something I wasn't able to do when I was younger and now will be able to do it," said Victor. He plans on applying for business jobs when he graduates and find a way to help other vets. He said, "what can I do to make life for someone better? I'm not close minded to even starting my own business because the idea is I'm paying back."

This program helps vets prepare for, find and maintain new employment opportunities.

"We work with veterans to determine their interests, aptitudes and abilities and then help them to achieve those goals," said William Streitberger, the Program Director. He's a success story from the program himself. He added, "right after 9/11 i found myself out of work. a single guy with 3 daughters and no where to turn so i came in to the vr and e program. i started with my education leading to a business degree. at that same time i started my career with the VA back in 2002 and fast forward 18 years i now have the privilege and honor of running the very program that changed my professional life. it is a testament to how this program is and always will be a success."

Streitberger said they are seeing an increase in applications for the program and Victor recommends everyone who can, take advantage of it.

Victor stressed, "this program is a blessing to have because I never thought I would find a place where I would be able to go to school, assist pay and other ways they assist. I know there are veterans that really need their help and aren't getting the help for it."

In the world of COVID-19, it is even more imperative that The American Legion urges congress to remove the 12-year delimiting date. Allowing veterans who have become unemployed/under employed to receive new skills that will make them competitive in today's workforce.

***Resolution No. 336: Support Legislation that Would Change the 12-Year Delimiting Date for Eligibility to Chapter 31 Benefits.***

*[Reported by Ariel De Jesus]*

## TOPIC 5: VETERAN HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced on September 14, 2020 recently awarded \$1.3 million in grants to 11 regional homelessness nonprofit organizations to bolster suicide prevention services for Veterans who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

<https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5520>

The Department of Housing and Urban Development on September 23, 2020 announced over half a million dollars in additional funding to HUD Fair Housing Assistance Program (FHAP) agencies in 12 states to support activities related to COVID-19. These awards are part of \$1.5 million in Partnership and Special Enforcement Effort funds provided through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) Act of 2020, which President Trump signed into law to provide federal agencies with the resources needed to combat COVID-19. In June, HUD awarded approximately \$1 million of this funding to 19 FHAP organizations.

[https://www.hud.gov/press/press\\_releases\\_media\\_advisories/HUD\\_No\\_20\\_152](https://www.hud.gov/press/press_releases_media_advisories/HUD_No_20_152)



United States Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson on September 11th [announced the allocation](#) of the remaining \$1.988 billion in CARES Act funding for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. The allocation focuses funds towards

places with households facing higher risk of eviction. To date, HUD has provided nearly \$5 billion in CDBG funding nationwide to help communities combat the coronavirus and alleviate economic hardship.

*[Reported by Teresa Lewis]*



## TOPIC 6: CAREER FAIRS

ALL IN-PERSON CAREER FAIRS SCHEDULED THROUGH SEPTEMBER HAVE BEEN CANCELLED, SUSPENDED, OR POSTPONED.



**The American Legion is working on future virtual workshops and career fairs.**

**The National staff is currently working with the Department of North Carolina to host its next virtual career fair.**

Newly discharged veterans claiming benefits totaled 13,523, a decrease of 454 from the prior week.

*Upcoming Virtual Career Fair with the Department of North Carolina*

*The mission of The American Legion's National Veterans Employment & Education Commission is to take actions that affect the economic well-being of veterans, including issues relating to veterans' education, employment, home loans, vocational rehabilitation, homelessness, and small business.*

*[Reported by Ariel De Jesus]*

## TOPIC 7: SMALL BUSINESS

The American Legion continues to track the new COVID-19 stimulus package currently being negotiated in Congress. Benefits in the new stimulus package are vital to veteran small businesses, unemployed veterans and our Legion posts and departments.

Having passed the August 8<sup>th</sup> deadline for Paycheck Protection Program applications, lawmakers



*Nancy Pelosi Talks About the Next Stimulus Bill*

have finally ended a deadlock on Capitol Hill. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi have agreed to restart formal talks to strike a deal on a new economic relief bill, which is expected to deliver a second round of stimulus checks to millions of Americans.

Pelosi has reportedly tasked her committee heads to draft new legislation for a narrower bill than the Heroes Act proposed in May. The new House bill could reportedly be ready for a vote by Oct. 2, the Hill reported, citing Rep. Richard Neal, chairman of the Ways and Means Committee.

The deadline will still be tight as early voting is already starting in many states to decide the Nov. 3 election. And given the previous bipartisan sticking points, how much

time is there to agree on a new bill? Given this new information, we've pulled some dates and identified at least five possible scenarios that could yet play out for the next stimulus package. Here are the six most important things to know about stimulus checks. This story is updated often.

The Senate is scheduled to break until after the election following its current session, which ends on Oct. 9. If nothing changes, that's the last day a bill has to clear the *Senate* -- but that doesn't mean it's the final day a bill could pass.

The House, for example, is prepared to postpone the start of its next break, originally scheduled for Oct. 2, until a deal is reached. If the bill passes the Senate on or by Oct. 9, the House could pass it after that date. And if negotiators close in on a deal, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell could also compel the Senate to stay in session longer or come back early to vote on a proposal.

The dates above are based on Congressional voting schedules and the potential of both chambers delaying their planned recess. Based on remarks from Mnuchin, the IRS could potentially start sending checks before Nov. 3 if a new bill is passed by the third week of October.

After breaking down in August, formal talks for the overarching bill have yet to restart. The total cost of the bill and how the money would be used are at the heart of the disagreement. The White House has hinted it could go up to \$1.5 trillion, while the Democrats have come down from their initial \$3 trillion proposal to \$2.2 trillion. So there has been incremental progress.

If the Senate rejects the House's smaller bill, some in Washington say the way to break the stalemate is to pass a series of even narrower bills that target specific areas. There is growing support among House Democrats for passing a smaller bill now and then continuing to work out other issues, Politico reported.

*[Reported by Davy Leghorn]*

## **TOPIC 7b: SMALL BUSINESS**

The House Committee on Small Business Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Tax, and Capital Access will hold a hybrid hearing entitled “A Review of PPP Forgiveness.” The hearing is scheduled to begin at 9:30 AM (EST) on Friday, September 25, 2020 and will take place in room 2360 of the Rayburn House Office Building. Members who wish to participate remotely may do so via Cisco WebEx, information to be provided separately.

The hearing will provide an overview of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan forgiveness process and allow Members an opportunity to hear from lenders, borrowers, and other stakeholders about their experiences with the forgiveness process. The committee will examine loan forgiveness guidance and proposals for simplifying the loan forgiveness process for certain borrowers. <https://smallbusiness.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=3434>

U.S. Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, and Senator Angus King (I-ME) on September 24th led a bipartisan group of their Senate colleagues to introduce the [\*Providing Resources for Emergency Preparedness and Resilient Enterprises \(PREPARE\) Act\*](#). The legislation would reauthorize the Small Business Administration’s (SBA) Pre-Disaster Mitigation Pilot Program to give small businesses the

opportunity to take out low-interest loans for the purpose of proactively implementing mitigation measures to protect their property from future disaster related damage. In addition to Senators Rubio and King, the legislation is cosponsored by Senators Ben Cardin (D-MD), Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, John Kennedy (R-LA), Joni Ernst (R-IA), Ron Wyden (D-OR), and Susan Collins (R-ME).

“The PREPARE Act would allow small businesses the opportunity to invest in mitigation before a disaster strikes,” **Chairman Rubio said**. “Investing in disaster mitigation on the front end saves business’, as well as taxpayers’, dollars, while reducing potential risks to property. I am proud to introduce this bipartisan, bicameral legislation that would improve the SBA’s previous program and allow businesses to be more prepared and more resilient in the future.”

<https://www.sbc.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?id=C5BEECA8-AD03-40EB-AFD3-65F64D192E67>

U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship Ranking Member Ben Cardin (D-Md.), U.S. Senator Chris Coons (D-Del.), and U.S. Representative Anthony Delgado (D-N.Y.) today introduced the *Small Business Debt Relief Extension Act*. At the end of September, hundreds of thousands of businesses will reach the end of emergency debt relief for SBA loans. The bill



would extend debt relief for small businesses through at least February 2021 for all borrowers and further for those particularly hard-hit by the pandemic.

The Small Business Debt Relief program has provided nearly \$8 billion in relief to some of America’s smallest, most at-risk employers during the recession. With no

application required for businesses and minimal administrative burden, the program has delivered relief to 320,000 credit-challenged small business concentrated most heavily in the service industries hardest hit by the pandemic—by providing six months of principal, interest, and fee payments on all preexisting, deferred, and new 7(a) loans, 504 loans and microloans. Coons, Cardin, and Delgado [authored](#) the program in the *CARES Act*.

<https://www.sbc.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?id=BA64FCF7-F4CD-4CB0-935C-3FD0E526BE42>

Google.org is making a three \$3 million grant to support Hispanics in Philanthropy's PowerUp Fund, which will provide Latino-owned small businesses across California, New York and Texas with access to capital and capacity building support to help them through economic uncertainty. To apply, go to: <https://grants.ureeka.biz/powerup-program>

[Reported by Teresa Lewis]

## TOPIC 8: EDUCATION

The American Legion continues to play a key role in the development of national education policy regarding the oversight of quality educational programs that lead to gainful employment. This week, Dr. Joe Wescott, National Higher Education Consultant, worked closely with professional staff on the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee to provide advice on key sections of H.R. 4625, Protect the GI Bill Act.



This important legislation places into statute critical provisions found in the Principles of Excellence, an Executive Order developed by the Obama White House to protect veterans, by requiring institutions to provide information and set up administrative safeguards such as personnel contacts and financial information sheets on educational costs. But changes supported by the Legion go even further by supporting a new national risk based survey model, strong statutory support for the state agencies that ensure

compliance, namely the State Approving Agencies, and support for greater outreach to veterans about their education benefits, particularly in the area of apprenticeships and on the job training. This new legislation will also clarify how the Department of Veterans Affairs responds to educational institutions that are accused of fraudulent advertising or improper enrollment practices.

The American Legion continues to take a leadership role in making sure veterans have access to quality educational/training programming supporting their successful transition into the civilian world. Director Joe Sharpe is a member of the National Risk Based Survey Advisory Council which just this week held its fourth meeting virtually. This group of influential thought leaders from across the higher education and accreditation landscape is providing direction and guidance for the development of the national RBS model mentioned above. This new model will change the way federal and state oversight is performed at GI Bill approved institutions for the next decade. This protects our veterans while giving them the training they need for future success.

All of this is only possible due to the work of the National Employment Commission and the unwavering resolution and dedication of our volunteers to Veterans and their families.

*[Reported by Joe Wescott]*

**Joseph C. Sharpe, Jr., Director**  
**Veterans Employment & Education Division**  
**202.861.2700 ext. 2989**  
**Week Ending: 9/25/2020**

---