

**NATIONAL VETERANS EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION COMMISSION**

**TOPIC 1: ECONOMY**

<b>HOUSEHOLD</b>		<b>DATA</b>				
<b>Table A-5. Employment status of the civilian population 18 years and over by veteran status, period of service, and sex, not seasonally adjusted</b>						
[Numbers in thousands]						
<b>Employment status, veteran status, and period of service</b>	<b>Total</b>		<b>Men</b>		<b>Women</b>	
	<b>Nov 2019</b>	<b>Nov 2020</b>	<b>Nov 2019</b>	<b>Nov 2020</b>	<b>Nov 2019</b>	<b>Nov 2020</b>
<b>Unemployed</b>	307	552	252	492	55	60
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	3.4	6.3	3.1	6.4	5.1	5.3

*The national unemployment rate is 6.7 percent (November 2020). Gulf War II veterans' unemployment rate is 6.9 percent. Currently, the unemployment rate for Gulf War II women veterans is 5.7 percent (up from 3.6 percent in October).*

In November 2020, the veteran unemployment rate was 6.3%, up from 5.9% last month. The comparable non-veteran unemployment rate was 6.6% in November.

**TOPIC 2: CONFERENCE CALLS**

*On Monday, January 11*, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division had a discussion with NASAA Legislative Chair on shared priorities with American Legion and important legislation passed in 2016. Also, had a conversation with SAA Pilot State leaders.

*On Monday, January 11*, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with the VACOE (Veteran’s Administration Committee on Education) Subcommittee Leaders to discuss forthcoming subcommittee meetings. Next meeting with VACOE is January 27.

*On Tuesday, January 12*, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended HVAC Minority Call to discuss priorities for the 117th Congress. Renewed emphasis on Toxic Exposures and also asking VA what their plans are to deal with the claims backlog.

*On Tuesday, January 12*, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division had a discussion of the Stimulus Package and how Treasury is required to work with VA to ensure Veterans receive their checks. Interest by the Committee in looking at the Mental Health impact of COVID-19.

***On Tuesday, January 12***, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with the George W. Bush Institute Working Group Leaders to discuss path how to produce White Papers and Recommendations for Stand To in February.

***On Tuesday, January 12***, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with Illinois SAA Director to discuss pilot work and legislative issues involving NASAA and TAL.

***On Wednesday, January 13***, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division is following how HVAC Minority will be tracking advances in this area closely to ensure that funds appropriated to this effort is spent on the roll out of this advance.

***On Wednesday, January 13***, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division had a conversation with Jon Clarke on the digital GI Bill.

***On Wednesday, January 13***, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division has projects on the works to include the CCME Panel in early February which National Higher Education Consultant, Joe Wescott and Director of National Veterans Employment and Education, Joe Sharpe plan to serve on.

***On Wednesday, January 13***, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a conference call with Friday Marketing to review the Military Credentialing report. Friday requested testimonials from all 5 MCAI work streams.

***On Thursday, January 14***, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division discussed of Working Group Products and Run of Show for the meeting. Expect audience in excess of 400 people from across the higher education and Veterans benefits spectrum.

***On Thursday, January 14***, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division is attending GWB Bush Institute Update (Virtual) on Stand-to meeting is scheduled for February 18<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 - 3:30pm. President Bush and Bob McDonald will be speaking. Joe Wescott will be serving on a panel.

***On Friday, January 15***, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division discussed with HVAC staffers and congressional, work on Distance Learning white paper.

***On Friday, January 15***, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with NASAA/Education Counsel/Lumina on RBS project rollout this month.

***On Friday, January 15***, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended DOL VETS Veterans Day VSO Webinar/"Virtual Coffee" hosted by DOL Assistant Secretary Lowry. The meeting was Secretary Lowry's opportunity to say a final farewell to the VSO community, as he has been informed that the Biden Administration intends to nominate new Department of Labor political appointees.

## **GLOSSARY OF FREQUENTLY USED ABBREVIATIONS**

ACE: American Council on Education  
ACP: American Corporate Partners, a veterans support organization  
ATLAS: Accessing Telehealth through Local Area Stations, a V.A. telehealth initiative  
BLS: Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics  
C&P: V.A.'s Compensation and Pension exam  
CAVC: Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims  
COLA: Cost-of-living adjustment  
CSAAVE: California State Approving Agency for Veterans Education  
DIMO: Defense Security Cooperation Agency/Defense Institute for Medical Operations  
DOD: Department of Defense  
DOL-VETS: Department of Labor, Veterans Employment and Training Services  
EdCounsel: Higher education consulting firm  
EIDL program. SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loans  
EIDL: Economic Injury Disaster Loan  
GAO: Government Accountability Office  
GPD: V.A.'s Grant and Per Diem Program for homeless veterans  
GWB: George W. Bush Higher Education Policy Work Group  
HEROES ACT of 2003: Higher Education Relief Opportunities for Students Act of 2003. Grants the Secretary of Education the authority to waive requirements that impede military borrowers' access to critical repayment protection during the war, military operation, or national emergency.  
HVAC: House Veterans Affairs Committee  
MCAI: American Legion's Military Credentialing Advancement Initiative  
MSLP: The Federal Reserve's Main Street Lending Program  
MSO: Military Support Organization  
NAICU: National Association of Independent Colleges & Universities  
NASAA: National Association of State Approving Agencies. Responsible for approving school funding for GI Bill  
NAVPA: National Association of Veterans Program Administrators  
NCA: V.A.'s National Cemetery Administration  
NDAA: National Defense Authorization Act  
NLD: American Legion's National Legislative Division  
OPM: Office of Personnel Management  
PPP: Paycheck Protection Program  
RBS: Risk-Based Survey Model  
RPIC: Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge  
S2S: Service to School, a veterans organization  
SAA: State Approving Agency, responsible for approving school funding for GI Bill  
SBA: Small Business Administration  
STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, Medical  
SVA: Student Veterans of America, a veterans organization  
SVAC: Senate Veterans Affairs Committee  
TAPS: Transition Assistance Program for Survivors, a nonprofit for Gold Star Families  
TEAM Act: Senate Bill 4393, to improve the provision of health care for veterans who were exposed to toxic substances from burn pits  
TFA: American Legion's Temporary Financial Assistance program  
USAID: United States Agency for International Development  
USDA: United States Department of Agriculture  
USERRA: Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act  
VA&R: American Legion's Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division

VACO: Veterans Affairs Central Office  
VBA: V.A.'s Veterans Benefits Administration  
VE&E: Veterans Employment and Education Division  
VES: Veterans Education Success, a veterans organization  
VSO: Veterans Service Organization

### TOPIC 3a: TRACKING LEGISLATION

**GI Bill Repair Act of 2020:** To extend to black veterans of World War II, their surviving spouses, and direct descendants eligibility for specific housing and educational assistance programs administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs

(Tracked by John Kamin)

[Resolution No.: None on file](#)

**Status: Currently on hold, has not been introduced**

**Homeless Veteran Coronavirus Response Act:** The bill allows V.A. 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 V.A. to ensure veterans participating in V.A. homeless programs have access to V.A. telehealth services.

(Tracked by Teresa Lewis)

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

**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 V.A. Medical Centers to allow homeless veterans to shelter on V.A. 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 1615:** The American Legion supports legislation that would streamline and improve the verification process for veteran-owned small businesses and veteran-owned small businesses.

(Tracked by Davy Leghorn)

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

**Status: Passed at the 2016 National Convention.**

**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](#)

**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 PPP loans' terms 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 V.A. 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)

[Resolution No.: Currently studying for appropriate resolution.](#)

**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.

**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](#)

**S. 3745, 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](#)

### TOPIC 3b: ACTION TAKEN ON LEGISLATION

**Building Credit Access for Veterans Act:** A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to establish an automated process for obtaining alternative credit rating information and other purposes.

(Tracked by Ariel)

**Status: Draft Bill / Letter of Support submitted on October 13**

**HR 8426:** Protecting Apprenticeship Training for Veterans Act: Currently, veterans must meet a minimum number of apprenticeship hours to receive their Housing Allowance. Due to pandemic work shortages, veterans in those programs now face a reduction or suspension in their stipend. This would allow veteran apprentices who were laid off to roll over excess hours from a previous month to meet the hourly requirement.

(Tracked by John Kamin)

[Resolution: Resolution No. 25: Support and Expand Apprenticeship Opportunities for Servicemembers](#)

**Status: Letter of Support drafted**

**HR 4941: Veteran Employment Transition Act” or the “VET Act”** was sponsored by Representative Andy Kim. The bill's last action 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 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 in the area.

(Tracked by Ariel De Jesus)

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

**Status: Letter of Support submitted**

**HR 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 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 Ariel/Raymond)

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

**Status: Pending Letter of Support**

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

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

**Status: Letter of Support submitted**

**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)

**Status: 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, 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)

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

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

**HR 7111: Veterans Economic Recovery Act of 2020:** Require the Secretary of V.A. 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 students' and schools' payments through the Post 9/11 GI Bill.

(Tracked by John Kamin)

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

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

**HR 7445:** To expand eligibility for home loans from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to individual members of the Armed Forces reserve components.

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

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

#### TOPIC 4: CAREER FAIRS

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

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

Newly discharged veterans claiming benefits totaled 9,143, a decrease of 2,011 from the prior week.

**The Department of Georgia participated in a career fair on December 10<sup>th</sup>, having 101 stop by their booth, and engaging with 16 job seekers.**

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

*[Reported by Ariel De Jesus]*



THE AMERICAN LEGION  
DEPARTMENT of TEXAS

# VIRTUAL CAREER FAIR

Employment Opportunities are Waiting for You. Register Now and Connect  
with Local and Nationwide Employers Looking to Hire.

Tuesday, February 9, 2021 ★ 10:00am-2:00pm (Central Time)



Job Seeker Registration

Employer Registration



## TOPIC 5: EDUCATION

Gillette College has made history as the first college in Wyoming to have its own American Legion post.



*National Commander James W. "Bill" Oxford signing Wyoming Post 307's charter*

American Legion Post 307, located in the Veterans Services Office at Gillette College, was officially created in early November.

Brian Yeager, veterans adviser for the college, said it now serves 44 veterans and six dependents.

This past spring, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Yeager partnered with American Legion Post 42 to provide new lanes of support for local veterans at Gillette College, including the

following services:

- Veterans education claims and appeals
- Veterans disability claims and appeals
- VA health care registration
- Veteran health care advocacy
- Enhanced academic support
- Veteran benefits education workshops
- Dedicated veteran networking

Yeager said those enhanced services “led to a 90% successful completion rate among veterans despite the closures due to COVID-19.”

This fall, Yeager and the college’s student veterans club submitted a request to form their own American Legion post at the college. Its charter was officially signed in early November. Staff Sgt. Jim Lish, adjutant for the American Legion Department of Wyoming, said the organization has been wanting to have posts at colleges in Wyoming.

“We’ve actually been trying to get one started for a while,” Lish said. “It’s pretty epic for our department.”

The American Legion hopes to one day have a post set up at each college in the state.

“It’s really thinking outside the box,” Lish said. “It helps bring the younger veterans into the American Legion, which wouldn’t typically join.”

During the application process, Yeager learned that there wasn’t an American Legion post with Wyoming’s area code.

“We couldn’t believe that number wasn’t taken and it didn’t take us long to get ahold of it,” he said.

Post 307 is named in honor of Staff Sgt. Brian Bland, a fallen Marine from Newcastle, Yeager's hometown. He said Bland was "one of the best among us," and Post 307 will "strive to bring his very presence back to life among us in all that we do."

It is not meant to be in competition with American Legion Post 42, Yeager said. Post 307's main purpose is to help veterans with paperwork that can be needlessly complicated.

"There are support systems out there that can get us where we need to go," Yeager said. "It's the use of those systems that is just a bureaucratic headache."

"It's pretty taxing to have it done at the VA," Lish said, adding that for veterans trying to focus on a college education, getting paperwork completed for claims and benefits can be stressful. Yeager can take that off their plate and complete it for them.

Yeager said a veteran does not need to be a member of Post 307 to use its services.

"Our attitude on that campus is, if you come through that door and you're a veteran, and we can help you, we're going to," he said. "If vets are interested in enrolling classes, that's great. If not, they'll still be served."

"Frequently, we have found veterans that come in and are interested in exploring avenues of health care and support, and are also interested in exploring education," Yeager added. "(Education) made a big change in my life. If we can make that offer for other veterans, we're going to do so."

The Campbell County Commission commended Yeager and Gillette College for their work.

"You guys have been nothing but a shining star for our veterans," said Commissioner Del Shelstad.

"The big thing is helping them get through the bureaucratic nightmare that they have when they get services," said Commissioner D.G. Reardon. "That's encouraging and quite enlightening that you guys can help them, and other great things can come of that."

*[Reported by John Kamin]*

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**Week Ending: 1/15/2021**