

The Weekly Report

July 30, 2021

The latest news, views, and announcements

INSIDE

—
Economy

—
Employment

—
Education

—
Homelessness & Housing

—
Small Business

—
Meetings & Conferences

—
Career Fairs

—
Legislation Tracking

—
Resource Page

—
More Stories

National Veterans Employment & Education Division



VE&E's Latest News Story See what's new today:



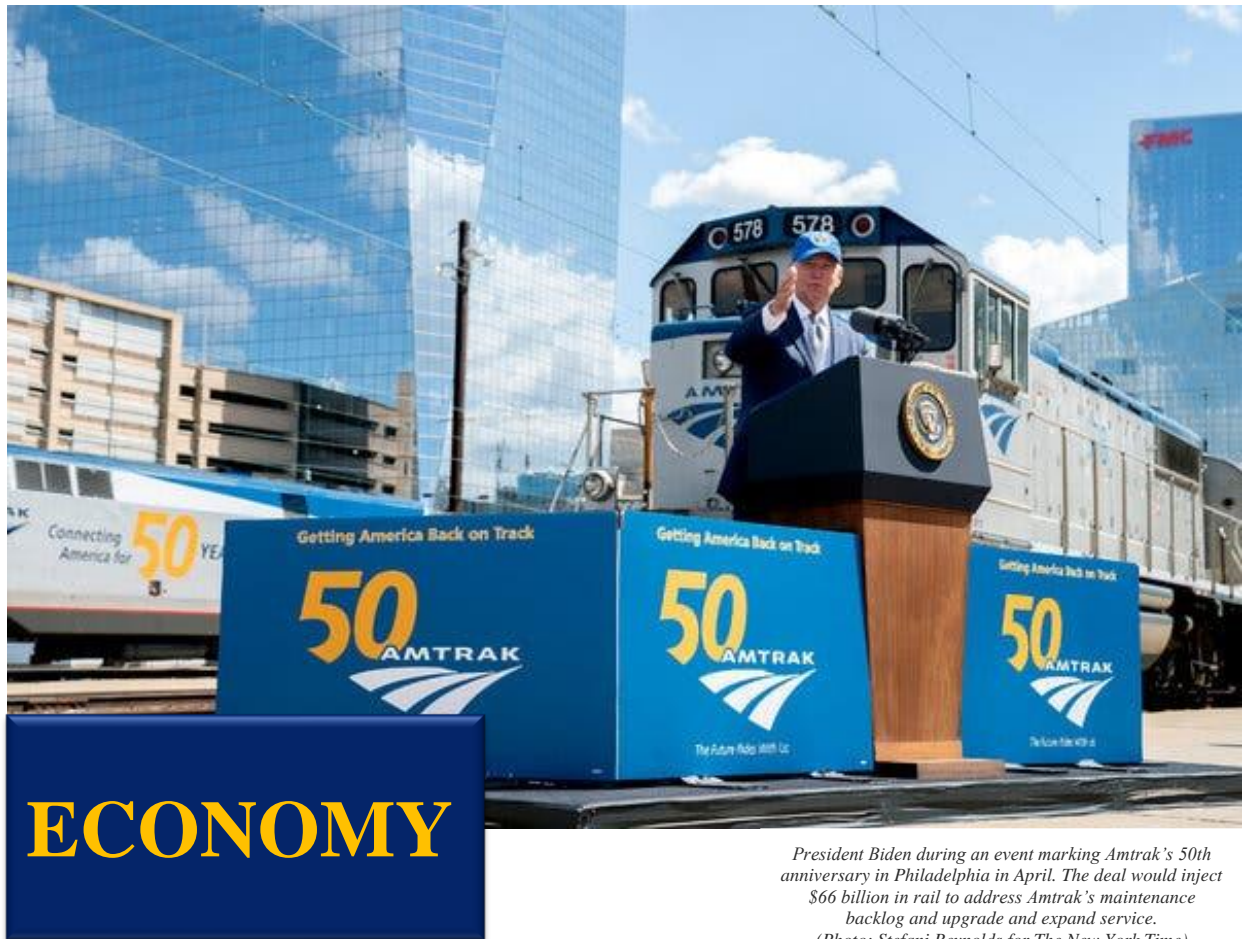
*Daniel J. Seehafer, Chairman of the Veterans
Employment & Education Division,
The American Legion*

Commission Chairman, Daniel Seehafer submitted a letter of support to allow veterans to use their GI-Bill to start/grow their businesses.

Also, The Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee cleared 13 bills today, including Chairman Jon Tester's comprehensive legislation to permanently expand pandemic-relief resources essential to providing critical care and support for unhoused veterans and their families through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The Senator's bill received strong backing from various Veterans Service Organizations nationwide and in Montana.

[Read full Press Release Here](#)

“With rising mortgage and leasing rates increasing pressure on already strained services for veterans facing homelessness, the time is now to safeguard the resources that have proven the most effective for veterans at risk,” said Daniel J. Seehafer, Chairman of the American Legion. “The Building Solutions for Veterans Experiencing Homelessness Act helps veterans get quickly back on their feet by removing barriers on funding for temporary housing, improve case management services, and making permanent the Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program. The American Legion is proud to support this landmark legislation and applauds Senator Tester’s leadership on behalf of our nation’s heroes.”



A LOOK AT WHAT THE BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE DEAL WOULD DO

The White House and bipartisan lawmakers have agreed on a package that would provide funding for roads, bridges and other physical infrastructure.

After weeks of debate and discussion, the White House and a bipartisan group of senators said on Wednesday that they had reached agreement on an infrastructure bill.

The \$1 trillion package is far smaller than the \$2.3 trillion plan that President Biden had originally proposed and would provide about \$550 billion in new federal money for public transit, roads, bridges, water and other physical projects over the next five years, according to a White House fact sheet. That money would be cobbled together through a range of measures, including “repurposing” stimulus funds already approved by Congress, selling public spectrum

and recouping federal unemployment funds from states that ended more generous pandemic benefits early.

Although Mr. Biden conceded that “neither side got everything they wanted,” he said the deal would create new union jobs and make significant investments in public transit.

“This deal signals to the world that our democracy can function, deliver and do big things,” Mr. Biden said in a statement. “As we did with the transcontinental railroad and the interstate highway, we will once again transform America and propel us into the future.”

Lawmakers have yet to release legislative text of the bill, and although the Senate voted to advance it in an initial vote on Wednesday evening, it still faces several hurdles. But if enacted, the package would mark a significant step toward repairing the nation's crumbling infrastructure and preparing it for the 21st century.

Here is a look at the bipartisan group's agreement for the final package.

Funding for roads and bridges

The package provides \$110 billion in new funding for roads, bridges and other major projects. The funds would be used to repair and rebuild with a "focus on climate change mitigation," according to the White House.

That funding would only begin to chip away at some of the nation's pressing infrastructure needs, transportation experts say. The most recent estimate by the American Society of Civil Engineers found that the nation's roads and bridges have a \$786 billion backlog of needed repairs.

Highway and pedestrian safety programs would receive \$11 billion under the deal. Traffic deaths, which have increased during the pandemic, have taken a particular toll on people of color, according to a recent analysis from the Governors Highway Safety Association. Traffic fatalities among Black people jumped 23 percent in 2020 from the year before, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. In comparison, traffic fatalities among white people increased 4 percent during the same time period.

The deal also includes funding dedicated to "reconnecting communities" by removing freeways or other past infrastructure projects that ran through Black neighborhoods and other communities of color. Although Mr. Biden originally proposed investing \$20 billion in the new program, the latest deal includes only \$1 billion.

Investments in public transit

Public buses, subways and trains would receive \$39 billion in new funding, which would be used

to repair aging infrastructure and modernize and expand transit service across the country.

While the amount of new funding for public transit was scaled back from a June proposal, which included \$49 billion, the Biden administration said it would be the largest federal investment in public transit in history.

Yet the funds might not be enough to fully modernize the country's public transit system. According to a report from the American Society of Civil Engineers, there is a \$176 billion backlog for transit investments.

Big investments in rail and freight lines

The deal would inject \$66 billion in rail to address Amtrak's maintenance backlog, along with upgrading the high-traffic Northeast corridor from Washington to Boston (a route frequented by East Coast lawmakers). It would also expand rail service outside the Northeast and mid-Atlantic.

Mr. Biden frequently points to his connection to Amtrak, which began in the 1970s, when he would travel home from Washington to Delaware every night to care for his two sons while serving in the Senate. The new funding would be the largest investment in passenger rail since Amtrak was created 50 years ago, according to the administration, and would come as the agency tries to significantly expand its service nationwide by 2035.

Clean water initiatives

The package would invest \$55 billion in clean drinking water, which would be enough to replace all of the nation's lead pipes and service lines. While Congress banned lead water pipes three decades ago, more than 10 million older ones remain, resulting in unsafe lead levels in cities and towns across the country.

Beefing up electric vehicles

To address the effects of climate change, the deal would invest \$7.5 billion in building out the nation's network of electric vehicle charging stations, which could help entice more drivers to switch to such cars by getting rid of so-called charger deserts. The package would also expand

America's fleet of electric school buses by investing \$2.5 billion in zero-emission buses.

Funding the investments

How to pay for the spending has been one of the most contentious areas, with Republicans opposed to Mr. Biden's plan to raise taxes and empower the I.R.S. to help pay for the package. Instead, the bipartisan group has agreed on a series of so-called pay-fors that largely repurpose already-approved funds, rely on accounting changes to raise funds and, in some cases, assume the projects will ultimately pay for themselves.

The biggest funding source is \$205 billion that the group says will come from "repurposing of certain Covid relief dollars." The government has approved trillions in pandemic stimulus funds,

and much, but not all, of it has been allocated. The proposal does not specify which money will be repurposed, but Republicans have pushed for the Treasury Department to take back funds from the \$350 billion that Democrats approved in March to help states, local governments and tribes deal with pandemic-related costs.

Another \$53 billion is assumed to come from states that ended more generous federal unemployment benefits early and return that money to the Treasury Department. An additional \$28 billion is pegged to requiring more robust reporting around cryptocurrencies, and \$56 billion is presumed to come from economic growth "resulting from a 33 percent return on investment in these long-term infrastructure projects."



EMPLOYMENT

**VA UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT WOULD BE PROTECTED
UNDER THIS PLAN**

A new House proposal would make the Department of Veterans Affairs Individual Unemployability program permanent even for elderly veterans, following attempts in recent years to pare back the benefit.

On Tuesday, Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif. and chairwoman of the House Committee on Financial Services, introduced the Protecting Benefits for Disabled Veterans Act, arguing the change is needed to provide assured financial support for veterans who depend on the program. Codifying the program is needed “so that we can ensure all veterans who are unable to secure a job due to a service-related disability receive benefits,” Waters said in a statement.

“It also ensures that veterans are not kicked out of the program simply because they’ve earned other benefits, like retiree benefits.” That was a major friction point between veterans advocates and President Donald Trump’s administration, which proposed cutting back on the benefit for veterans after they reach retirement age.

Under current rules, the Individual Unemployability program awards payouts at the 100 percent disabled rate to veterans who cannot

find work due to service-connected injuries, even if actual rating is less than that. That financial support can top \$20,000 a year for some individuals. The program is aimed largely at working-age veterans, but VA officials said in 2018 that about 225,000 veterans over the age of 60 were also enrolled in the program.

At the time, the Trump administration argued that unemployment benefits for those individuals didn’t make sense, since many were collecting retirement or Social Security benefits not available to working-age vets.

Cutting off the benefits for veterans eligible for Social Security payouts would save about \$3 billion a year. But lawmakers rejected the plan after veterans’ groups argued that the money provides a critical safety net for those elderly veterans and removing it would create significant hardship.

Waters’ plan would go further, ensuring that future administrations can’t revisit the idea. The IU program has been in operation since 1934 but is not authorized in statute, meaning it can be altered or ended without first getting congressional approval.

FOR THOUSANDS OF DISABLED VETS, THIS JOB TRAINING PROGRAM MAY BE BETTER THAN THE GI BIL

Hundreds of thousands of veterans use their GI Bill benefits annually to earn a college degree, but thousands may be better served bypassing the well-known education program in favor of another Veterans Affairs program aimed at employment help for disabled veterans, according to a new report released this week.

Officials from the Government Accountability Office said the Veteran Readiness and Employment program was used by about 123,000 veterans last year but has the potential to benefit even more, if VA leaders step up efforts to promote it.

“Most school and veterans service organization officials we interviewed said veterans with disabilities often choose the GI Bill for education benefits because they are unaware that the VR&E program exists,” the report states

“The officials attributed this lack of awareness to VA’s relatively limited promotion of VR&E and because of the prominence of the GI Bill as an education benefit program.”

The GI Bill education program dates back almost 80 years and is among the most well-known veterans benefits in the country. Under the Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits which went into

effect in 2009, veterans or eligible dependents can receive full tuition payments at state universities, plus a monthly housing stipend and other financial assistance.

According to VA statistics, about 658,000 veterans used the benefit in 2020, at a cost of about \$10.1 billion.

The VR&E program had about one-fifth the enrollment and about one-tenth the price tag of the GI Bill last year. To be eligible, veterans must be at least 10-percent disabled with a service-connected injury.

GAO officials said it may be more beneficial for many disabled veterans because of the flexibility of the program, and the focus not just on degree completion but also job training and independent living.

“Unlike the GI Bill, VR&E participants work with an assigned vocational rehabilitation counselor, who helps the veteran identify a suitable employment goal and draft an employment plan,” the report states.

“To develop the plan, the counselor and veteran review labor market information for jobs, taking into consideration the veteran’s identified abilities, aptitudes, and interests.”

That can include college classes, internships or apprenticeships. If participants opt to take classes, they can receive payouts on par with the post-9/11 GI Bill, and later switch to that program to complete degrees under certain circumstances. Under current rules, individuals who use GI Bill benefits first cannot switch back to the VR&E program.

Veterans groups have lauded the VR&E in Capitol Hill testimony in recent years, and lobbied for lawmakers to expand funding and resources for the efforts.

Researchers noted that not everyone who uses the GI Bill is eligible for the VR&E program, and that close work with a counselor or a

focus on a specific job field may make the vocational rehabilitation program less attractive than the open-ended GI Bill for others.

But the GAO findings say that thousands of veterans may prefer it, if they are made more aware of the program. They say that department officials should do a better job explaining the differences and benefits of both the GI Bill

program and VR&E program to eligible veterans.

“More communication would help better position veterans with disabilities to take the greatest advantage of the benefits these programs can offer,” the report states.

VA officials said they are working on that. In a statement to GAO, department Chief of Staff Tanya Bradsher said staff are already revamping materials on the two programs with an eye towards better promoting the VR&E benefits. New online information pages and print handouts on the program are due this fall.

The department’s current fact sheets and eligibility guidelines are available through the [Veterans Benefits Administration web site](#).



*The Veteran Readiness and Employment program may be a better option than the GI Bill for thousands of veterans, according to the Government Accountability Office.
(Photo: Sgt. Alexander Snyder)*

Staff Meetings & Conferences on Employment

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a hearing on “The FTC on Consumer Protection Modernization”. The purpose of this hearing was to facilitate a discussion in a hybrid legislative format between The Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce of the Committee on Energy and Commerce and the leadership of the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). The topics discussed included data privacy, accountability, oversight, and consumer protection. There was a general consensus that more must be done to protect consumers, enhance data privacy, and increase oversight of the organization. The draft bill regarding service members, veterans, and military families was especially welcome as this population continues to be targeted by scams. Some highlighted topics were:

- FTC Commissioners and Chairwoman agreed that the FTC should have more capabilities to prosecute civil penalties authorities and have a more streamlined rule-making process
- For-profit schools and pay day lenders are some of the most common organizations that target military communities
- **H.R. 4483, the "Veterans and Servicemember Consumer Protection Act of 2021"**
- Require the coordinator to create a website for service members and families and establish a process for reporting scams targeting this population

ECONOMIC NEWS RELEASE

- The national unemployment rate is 5.9 percent (June 2021)
- Gulf War II veterans' unemployment rate is 5.2 percent
- Gulf War II women veterans' unemployment rate is 9.5 percent
- In June 2021, the veteran unemployment rate was 4.8%. The comparable non-veteran unemployment rate was 5.9% in June
- Newly discharged veterans claiming benefits totaled 571, an increase of 6 from the preceding week.

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	
	June 2020	June 2021	June 2020	June 2021	June 2020	June 2021
Unemployed	776	437	675	375	101	62
Unemployment rate	8.6	4.8	8.5	4.7	9.6	5.5



VETERANS WHO USE GI BILL HAVE LOWER INCOMES AFTER COLLEGE ENROLLMENTS

The post-9/11 GI Bill (PGIB) is an enormous and generous education benefit package aimed at getting veterans into and through college. According to the authors of [a new report published](#) in the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), its annual price tag is more than \$13 billion, which is more than all the grants and scholarships provided by all the states combined. They say it represents half of total Pell Grant spending.

They also say the program isn't working.

For example, years after accepting the benefits of the PGIB and enrolling in college programs, the incomes of the veterans in the program are actually lower than if they'd not gone to college

at all. That emerging reality is driven in part by the poor quality of the for-profit colleges many veterans are choosing - programs and degrees that, even when completed, return little to no value.

On the surface, the failure of for-profit colleges and programs is not news. Nonetheless, the new report by researchers from Texas A&M University, the University of Michigan, Dartmouth College, William & Mary, and the U.S. Department of the Treasury has some jarring findings.

First, the headline. The report says flatly, "the PGIB reduced average annual earnings nine years after separation from the Army by \$900 (on a

base of \$32,000).” When your annual income is \$32,000, losing nearly a thousand dollars is a big deal. Worse, the report says, “Under a variety of conservative assumptions, veterans are unlikely to recoup these reduced earnings during their working careers.”

The researchers say that the loss of income stems in part from loss of work experience while in school, the relatively low-skill levels and weak educational foundations of some veterans as well as increased enrollments in heavily-marketed, low-return for-profit colleges.

Those factors tend to overlap. Veterans with low skill levels are more likely to enroll in bad for-profit options, compounding their deficit. Quoting the report, “less advantaged veterans – those in ‘lower-skilled’ military occupations and those with lower AFQT scores – are more likely to enroll in college overall, but this is largely driven by increased enrollments in for-profit institutions. These veterans also experience larger negative earnings effects.”

In addition to earnings, the PGIB fault line between for-profits and public schools also shows up in degree attainment, where the report finds, “positive effects for those enrolled in four year public and community colleges, and negative effects for those enrolled in for-profit institutions.” The report also finds that, “longer-term labor market returns depend on the extent to which the resulting periods spent enrolled represent high-quality investments.”

In other words, if veterans make good educational choices and avoid the bad, mostly for-profit programs, they’re more likely to see a return on their investment of time and our collective investment of money. Unfortunately, those wise choices within the PGIB appear to be lacking. “Those who made their enrollment decisions after the expansion of [PGIB] benefits appear to have

made less productive investments, with a greater probability of for-profit enrollment and a lower likelihood of degree attainment conditional on additional enrollment,” the report says.

It’s a political wonder why policy leaders allow veterans and others to make “less productive investments” with tax dollars. If we all know where the pitfalls are - and we do - there is no reason we should continue to allow anyone, veterans especially, to be pulled into them. It’s not good for them. And it’s not good for taxpayers.

On the topic of bad for taxpayers, the report also says that the “implied average cost” for every marginal bachelor’s degree the PGIB produces - a degree that would not have been earned without PGIB benefits - is between \$486,000 and \$590,000.

That’s beyond irrational.

If this paper’s findings are accurate and substantiated, it’s difficult to say the PGIB is succeeding at its mission - helping veterans improve their post-service lives by delivering the benefits of college. It is at least not doing that well, or efficiently.

“This is sad to say, that the GI Bill does not work for many servicemembers, veterans and their families. What’s even sadder is that if you drill into the data, to the institutional and program level, it will likely be worse. There are many programs, for-profit and non-profit, that do not work out for servicemembers, veterans, and their families,” said Dahn Shaulis, a long time observer of veterans’ educational benefits and programs.

That is sad to say. It’s downright depressing that it will probably continue to be that way.



Staff Meetings & Conferences on Education

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a hearing on “House Transportation Committee on Rural Broadband”. The purpose of the hearing was to consider and markup H.R. 3193, the “Eliminating Barriers to Rural Internet Development Grant Eligibility Act” or the “E-BRIDGE Act.” One problem that the bill addresses is applying for grants without losing EDA funds. Some items discussed were:

- The draft bill would help rural and economically distressed communities
 - The pandemic showed that internet access is critical
 - Provides grant applicants with greater flexibility
 - Using public-private partnerships to install infrastructure
-

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a hearing on “The Cyber Talent Pipeline: Educating A Workforce To Match Today’s Workforce”. The purpose of the meeting was to hear from experts in fields working to educate next generation of cybersecurity workers and learn more about the programs in place and where greater investment is needed. Concerns on federal government latency, lack of leadership accountability, inadequate real time data on program effectiveness, and an inability to signal to the labor force into the requisite disciplines of cybersecurity were stated. Encouraging DoL and DoC to exploring cyber apprenticeships and encouraging more scholarship programs such as NSF’s Cybercorps can aid non-traditional and veteran populations to enter into a high demand market. Some areas covered were:

- Multi-pronged approach needed to train future workers, reskill workers currently available, and make sure that there the right training to address the desperate cybersecurity challenges in Information Technology and Operational Technology. CISA’s cyber security education and training program, CTAP, has been showing meaningful results.
 - CAE (schools, colleges, and universities) help to reskill, working with veterans and communities. CAE Pilot Apprenticeship program.
 - Over 15 years DOD and NHS have asked for distinguished IT and OT understanding and to better understand issues regarding cybereducation.
 - Cybercorps scholarship for service program run by NSF has been a great program for students to enter public service.
 - Military model (Academies vs ROTC) More cost effective in an ROTC model rather than a Brick-and-Mortar Institution.
 - Support of CISA discretionary funding. K-12 feeder program.
 - DHS has yet to finish its development and rollout of STEMS program
-



SENATE COMMITTEE ADVANCES BILL TO HELP HOMELESS VETERANS AS NATIONAL EVICTION MORATORIUM IS SET TO END

With the nationwide moratorium on evictions set to end this week, the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs advanced a bill Wednesday that would make permanent the increased assistance given during the coronavirus pandemic to combat veteran homelessness.

The Building Solutions for Veterans Experiencing Homelessness Act of 2021 would extend indefinitely the extra resources and flexibility given during the pandemic to the federal, state and local agencies that provide services to homeless veterans. Advocates have warned the expiration of these resources could

create an "unprecedented wave" of veteran homelessness.

Advocates for homeless veterans have said they also feared the end of the federal protections keeping landlords from evicting tenants. The moratorium ends Saturday.

In June, Kathryn Monet, CEO of the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, a nonprofit focused on ending veteran homelessness, urged lawmakers to extend the protections for tenants.

“I don’t think the economy has recovered to a point where people are able to cover all of these expenses or have all gone back to work,” Monet said at the time. “I think that’s a huge problem.”

One of the actions that Congress took at the start of the pandemic was to increase the maximum rates for the VA’s grant and per diem program. The money went to shelters, which get paid for filling beds but were unable to house as many veterans in order to abide by social distancing guidelines.

The higher rates allowed shelters to improve their facilities, space out veterans and provide better care. Under the bill introduced by Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., the rate would increase from a maximum of 115% to 200%.

In addition, the bill aims to provide all veterans with case-management services, increase funding for veteran employment initiatives, expand public transportation benefits to homeless veterans, and house aging veterans as they wait for placement

in long-term care facilities. It also establishes a five-year grant for programs that help veterans with recovery from substance abuse.

The effects of the pandemic on veteran homelessness remains relatively unknown. The Department of Housing and Urban Development issued a report in March that focused on the number of homeless veterans on a single night in January 2020, before the widespread effects of the pandemic reached the United States.

In January 2020, there were 37,252 veterans experiencing homelessness — an increase of 167 veterans, or 0.4%, from the previous year. The statistic stoked concern among advocates that the effects of the pandemic would add to an already regressive trend.

Tester’s bill was one of 13 pieces of legislation advanced by the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee on Wednesday. The bills still must get approved by the full Senate and House before becoming law.



SMALL BUSINESS

SBA ANNOUNCES OPENING OF PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM DIRECT FORGIVENESS PORTAL

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is launching a streamlined application portal to allow borrowers with Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans \$150,000 or less through participating lenders to apply for forgiveness directly through the SBA.

“The SBA’s new streamlined application portal will simplify forgiveness for millions of our smallest businesses -- including many sole proprietors -- who used funds from our Paycheck Protection Program loans to survive the pandemic,” said Administrator Isabel Casillas Guzman. “The vast majority of businesses waiting for forgiveness have loans under \$150,000. These entrepreneurs are busy running their businesses and are challenged by an overly complicated forgiveness process. We need to deliver forgiveness more efficiently so they can get back to enlivening our Main Streets, sustaining our neighborhoods and fueling our nation’s economy.”

This new change will help rush relief to over 6.5 million smallest of small businesses which has been the Administrator’s priority since day one. The new forgiveness platform will begin accepting applications from borrowers on August 4th, 2021. Lenders are required to opt-in to this program through <https://directforgiveness.sba.gov>. In addition to the technology platform, the SBA is standing up a PPP customer service team to answer questions and directly assist borrowers with their forgiveness applications.

Borrowers that need assistance or have questions should call (877) 552-2692, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. EST.

“This initiative will allow PPP borrowers to put their concerns of achieving full forgiveness behind them and focus on operating and growing their businesses again,” said Patrick Kelley, Associate Administrator for SBA’s Office of Capital Access. “We are pleased to be able to assist financial institutions across

the U.S. in processing forgiveness applications for small business owners.”

Paycheck Protection Program Summary

Overall, the SBA and lenders have worked to originate over 11.7 million loans totaling nearly \$800 billion in relief to over 8.5 million small businesses.

In 2021:

- SBA approved over 6.5M loans totaling over \$275B
- The average loan size was ~\$42 thousand (compared to \$101 thousand in 2020)
- 96% of loans went to businesses with fewer than 20 employees (compared to just 87% in 2020.)
- 32% of loans went to businesses in LMI communities (compared to just 24% in 2020)
- Direct Forgiveness Summary
- Over 600 banks have opted in to direct forgiveness, enabling over 2.17mm borrowers to apply through the portal (This represents 30% of loans \$150,000 or less that have not yet submitted for forgiveness)

“As one of the leading PPP lenders in the nation, Customers Bank is proud to partner with SBA to deliver responsive digital loan forgiveness service to the small business borrowers,” said Sam Sidhu, President & CEO of the bank. “The streamlined and efficient SBA PPP loan forgiveness portal will help borrowers and lenders move forward with economic growth and job creation following the pandemic. We encourage other lenders to join Customers Bank and opt-in to the SBA portal.”

Established by the CARES Act in 2020, the PPP was among the first COVID-19 small business economic aid programs and provided more than \$798 billion in economic relief to

small businesses and nonprofits across the nation, keeping employees working, and helping businesses come back stronger than ever. View the Interim Final Rule on PPP Forgiveness.

Other programs include Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL), EIDL Advance,

Targeted EIDL Advance, Supplemental EIDL Advance, Restaurant Revitalization Fund, Shuttered Venue Operators Grant, and SBA Debt Relief program. To learn more about these programs, please visit <http://www.sba.gov/relief>.

Staff Meetings & Conferences on Small Business

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a hearing on “House Small Business Committee Markup”. The Committee on Small Business held a hearing to markup of legislation to amend the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act. The House Small Business Committee under Chairwoman Nydia M. Velázquez, passed seven bipartisan bills to improve SBA lending programs, boost small business cyber-security, and reauthorize a program providing entrepreneurial development training to veterans. The seven bills reviewed were:

- H.R. 4256, “Investing in Main Street Act”
- H.R. 4481, “Small Business 7(a) Loan Agent Transparency Act”
- H.R. 4531, “7(a) Loan Agent Oversight Act”
- H.R. 3469, “Veteran Entrepreneurship Training Act of 2021”
- H.R. 3462, “SBA Cyber Awareness Act”
- H.R. 4515, “Small Business Development Center Cyber Training Act of 2021”
- H.R. 4513, “Small Business Advanced Cybersecurity Enhancements Act of 2021”

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with Senator Cory Booker staff to discuss a list of priorities in regards to veteran small business development. Some items discussed were:

- Support Effort of the Small Business Administration's Office of Veterans Business Development and Veterans Business Outreach Centers
 - The Veteran Business Outreach Centers (VBOCs) offer veterans in-depth counseling and mentor services that are vital in aiding veterans in starting or growing their small businesses. Currently, there are not enough VBOC offices to fully support business aspiring veterans.
- Expanding Post-9/11 GI Bill for Entrepreneurship
 - Our men and women returning home from military service certainly have entrepreneurial skills. Returning veterans are eligible for the GI Bill for education benefits, which are designed to give the veteran assistance toward obtaining an education. The GI Bill could be expanded to encourage veterans to establish their own businesses.



Virtual Job Fair

August 5, 2021

8:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M. CT

VIRTUAL CAREER SUMMIT

8am-4pm, and interview with regional and national employers at this education and hiring event.

Presented by [Hiring Our Heroes](#)

[More information](#)

Raleigh Veterans Job Fair

August 5, 2021

11:00 AM - 3:00 PM EDT

In-Person Hiring Event

A RecruitMilitary Job Fair is an event where job seekers with military experience can meet with recruiters from local and national companies. These events are free for U.S veterans, military spouses, transitioning military, and members of the Guard and Reserve.

[Register Here](#)

Philadelphia Veterans Job Fair

August 5, 2021

11:00 AM - 3:00 PM EDT

In-Person Hiring Event

A RecruitMilitary Job Fair is an event where job seekers with military experience can meet with recruiters from local and national companies. These events are free for U.S veterans, military spouses, transitioning military, and members of the Guard and Reserve.

[Register Here](#)

2021 MILITARY SPOUSE PROFESSIONAL NETWORK SUMMER SERIES

Hiring Our Heroes' Career Community, presented in collaboration with innovative partners, is a virtual education and training center that allows our nation's military community to engage in world-class career curriculum from anywhere.

[Register Here](#)

VIRTUAL CAREER SUMMIT

August 5, 2021

8 a.m. - 4 p.m. CST

Connecting World Class Military Talent with American Employers

Military community job seekers will meet, network, and interview with regional and national employers at this education and hiring event.

[Register Here](#)

INTERACTIVE WORKSHOPS FOR JOB SEEKERS

July 6, August 3 and September 7, 2021

[Register Here](#)

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

The American Legion's National Veterans Employment & Education Commission's Mission 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.



SMALL BUSINESS

H.R. 2082 - VA Supply Chain Resiliency Act: This bill would make certain improvements relating to the supply chain of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Status: 5/4/2021 - Voted 22 - 6 by House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

Support: 4/21/2021 - This bill was submitted for testimony

Resolution No. 55: [Mandatory use of the Veterans First Contracting Program](#)

H.R. 4515: This bill would amend the Small Business Act to require cyber certification for small business development center counselors.

Status: 7/19/2021 - Referred to the House Committee on Small Business

Resolution: *Pending Draft Resolution*

H.R.1687 - Small Business Cyber Training Act of 2021: This bill requires the Small Business Administration to establish a program for certifying at least 5 or 10% of the total number of employees of a small business development center to provide cybersecurity planning assistance to small businesses.

Status: 5/18/2021 – Introduced in the Senate

Resolution: *Pending Draft Resolution*

EDUCATION

S. 1480 - Recognizing Military Service in PSLF Act: This bill would allow service members who pause their student loan payments while deployed or on extended active duty orders to count that period of time toward their PSLF progress – which is currently not allowed.

Status: 4/29/2021 - Referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

Resolution No. 101 [Support for Continuation of Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program](#)

H.R. 1836 - Guard and Reserve GI Bill Parity Act of 2021: This bill would expand eligibility for the Post-9/11 GI Bill to count every day that a servicemember is paid and in uniform toward benefit eligibility in order to achieve GI Bill parity for National Guard and Reserve members.

Status: 6/16/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

[Resolution No. 349: Support Legislation to Improve the Post-9/11 GI Bill](#)

S. 1607 - Student Veterans Transparency and Protection Act of 2021: This bill would improve veterans' access to information about higher education and allow the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to restore benefits that veterans use at schools subject to civil enforcement.

Status: 05/13/2021 - Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

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

H.R. 2587 - SERVE Act: This bill would improve the ability of veterans with medical training to assist the United States in response to national emergencies by implementing programs to certify and credential veterans.

Status: 4/15/2021 - Referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

[Resolution No. 338: Support Licensure and Certification of Servicemembers, Veterans and Spouses](#)

H.R. 3586 - Veteran Education Empowerment Act: This bill would reauthorize and improve a grant program to assist institutions of higher education in establishing, maintaining, improving, and operating Student Veteran Centers

Status: 5/28/2021 - Referred to the House Committee on Education and Labor

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

H.R. 2327 - This bill would eliminate the time period for eligibility under Survivors' And Dependents' Educational Assistance Program of Department of Veterans Affairs

Status: 4/28/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

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

H.R. 4233 - Student Veterans Counseling Centers Eligibility Act: This bill would award grants to community-based Veteran Centers to provide counseling and mental health services to veterans using VA higher education benefits.

Status: 6/29/2021 - Referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

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

EMPLOYMENT

S. 94 - Hire Student Veterans Act: This bill allows a work opportunity tax credit for hiring a veteran attending an educational institution using educational assistance provided under certain programs administered by the Department of Defense or the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Status: 1/28/2021 - Referred to the Committee on Finance

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

HOUSING

H.R.492 - Supporting Veteran Families in Need Act: To amend title 38, United States Code, make permanent the Secretary of Veterans Affairs' authority to provide financial assistance for supportive services for very low-income veteran families in permanent housing.

Status: 6/16/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

Support: 4/21/2021 - This bill was submitted for testimony

[Resolution No. 331: Support Housing Preference for Low-Income Veterans in the Department of Housing and Urban Development](#)

S. 1838 - Building Credit Access for Veterans Act of 2021: This bill expands access to housing for veterans and current servicemembers by establishing a pilot program using alternative credit scoring information for veterans and service member.

Status: 5/26/2021 - Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

Support: 4/21/2021 - This bill was submitted for testimony

H.R. 711 - West Los Angeles VA Campus Improvement Act of 2021: This legislation would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) West Los Angeles Medical Center campus to use revenues from leases and easements as a dedicated funding source to build additional housing for homeless veterans, offset the high costs of housing construction, and help fund the provision of supportive services for veterans in the community.

Status: 6/23/2021 - Became Public Law No: 117-18

Support: 4/21/2021 - This bill was submitted for testimony

H.R. 2190 - Helping Homeless Veterans Act of 2021: This bill permanently establishes existing programs that assist homeless veterans and other veterans with special needs.

Status: 6/16/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

[Resolution No. 319: Expanding Veterans Employment and Homeless Services within the Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

S. 2172 - Building Solutions for Veterans Experiencing Homelessness Act: This bill improves grants, payments, and technical assistance provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to serve homeless veterans.

Status: 6/23/2021 - Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

Support: 6/23/2021 - This bill was submitted for testimony

[Resolution No. 319: Expanding Veterans Employment and Homeless Services within the Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

GLOSSARY OF FREQUENTLY USED TERMS

ACE: American Council on Education

ACP: American Corporate Partners, a veteran's 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
CCME: Council of College and Military Educators
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 veteran's 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 veteran's 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 veteran's organization
VSO: Veterans Service Organization



THE AMERICAN LEGION

VETERANS STRENGTHENING AMERICA



- We are on the Web:
 - <https://www.legion.org/>
- VE&E Publications:
 - [https://www.legion.org/publications#veterans employment & education](https://www.legion.org/publications#veterans%20employment%20&%20education)
- VE&E Awards:
 - <https://www.legion.org/careers/awards>

Resources:

- Veteran Career/Employment Center:
 - <http://legion.monster.com/?scmdlCmisc=1>
 - <https://www.legion.org/careers/resources>
- Homeless Veterans Find Help:
 - <https://www.legion.org/careers/homelesstaskforce>
 - <https://www.legion.org/homelessveterans/resources>
- Veterans Education Benefits:
 - <https://www.legion.org/education/statebenefits>
 - <https://www.legion.org/education/federalbenefits>
- Veteran Small Business Funding Program:
 - <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs>

MORE STORIES...

VA CHIEF OF STAFF REAFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO ENDING VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

“On any given night in America, there are approximately 37,000 Veterans who go to sleep without a home, with one out of ten of them living in Los Angeles County. VA leadership is committed to ending the crisis of Veteran homelessness through a housing-first model” [Continue reading the article](#)

VALLEY EMPLOYMENT FIRM KICKS OFF INITIATIVE TO 'HIRE OUR HEROES'

“It's a call to Valley employers, to consider hiring a veteran to fill their next job opening. Express Employment Professionals, a hiring company, is now highlighting the benefits and skills veterans bring to the workforce, as they rally to find jobs for unemployed veterans in Arizona” [Continue reading the article](#)

LEGISLATION AIMS TO HELP NATIONAL GUARD MEMBERS TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN LIFE

“A bipartisan group of legislators wants to help National Guard members nearing the end of their service transition to civilian life” [Continue reading the article](#)

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CREATES NEW OFFICE TO FOCUS ON RURAL GEORGIA

“Rural education in Georgia is getting special attention in the form of a new office within the state Department of Education that will focus on the needs of rural schools” [Continue reading the article](#)

YOU'VE SERVED YOUR COUNTRY NOW LET THE G.I. BILL SERVE YOU | OPINION

“This June marked the 77th anniversary of President Franklin D. Roosevelt signing the G.I. Bill into law. Officially known as the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, the G.I. Bill was established to help veterans of World War II attend college. Since that date, it has been responsible for tens of millions of veterans earning degrees, raising their families' standard of living and contributing to their local economies’ [Continue reading the article](#)

PORTMAN, WARREN PRAISE COMMITTEE PASSAGE OF VETERAN HOMELESSNESS BILL BY VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

“U.S. Senators Rob Portman (R-OH) and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) praise passage of their Improving Housing Outcomes for Veterans Act, legislation to ensure that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) adequately serves veterans experiencing homelessness, which unanimously passed out of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee’ [Continue reading the article](#)

Joseph C. Sharpe, Jr., Director
Veterans Employment & Education Division
1608 K St NW., Washington, DC 20006
Phone #: 202.861.2700 ext. 2989
E-Mail: JSharpe@legion.org