

# The Weekly Report

October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021

*The latest news, views, and announcements*

## INSIDE

*Economy*

*Employment & Transition*

*Education, Licensing & Credentialing*

*Homelessness & Housing*

*Small Business Development*

*Meetings & Conferences*

*Career Fairs*

*Legislation Tracking*

*Action taken on Legislation*

*Resource Page*

*More Stories*

## National Veterans Employment & Education Division



### VE&E'S LATEST NEWS STORY



Paul E. Dillard, National Commander of The American Legion

**Paul Dillard**, National Commander of The American Legion met with Senator Tester, Senator Moran, Representative Takano, and Representative Bost to discuss **H.R. 5545, The Remote Act** - A bill to extend certain expiring provisions of law relating to benefits provided under Department of Veterans Affairs educational assistance programs during COVID-19 pandemic.

This draft bill would extend an expiring provision of law established for student veterans using educational entitlements during the pandemic and is supported by [Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality of Servicemember and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#). Many higher education classes remain online due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic. At the initial onset of the pandemic, most classes adapted to online learning formats, which left student veterans at risk of financial instability from decreased monthly housing allowances (MHA).

This measure is set to expire in December of this year. This draft bill would extend that looming deadline to June 2022. American Legion supports this bill because it protects student veterans from unnecessary financial burdens, thereby, allowing them to continue their education using VA educational entitlements.



## ECONOMY

### THE ECONOMIC REBOUND IS STILL WAITING FOR WORKERS

*Despite school reopening's and the end of some federal aid, many people are in no rush to land a job. Savings and health concerns are playing a role.*

Fall was meant to mark the beginning of the end of the labor shortage that has held back the nation's economic recovery. Expanded unemployment benefits were ending. Schools were reopening, freeing up many caregivers. Surely, economists and business owners reasoned, a flood of workers would follow.

Instead, the labor force shrank in September. There are five million fewer people working than before the pandemic began, and three million fewer even looking for work.

The slow return of workers is causing headaches for the Biden administration, which was counting on a strong economic rebound to give momentum to its political agenda. Forecasters were largely blindsided by the problem and don't know how long it will last.

Conservatives have blamed generous unemployment benefits for keeping people at home, but evidence from states that ended the payments early suggests that any impact was small. Progressives say companies could find workers if they paid more, but the shortages aren't limited to low-wage industries.

Instead, economists point to a complex, overlapping web of factors, many of which could be slow to reverse.

The health crisis is still making it hard or dangerous for some people to work, while savings built up during the pandemic have made it easier for others to turn down jobs they do not want. Psychology may also play a role: Surveys suggest that the pandemic led many to rethink their priorities, while the glut of open jobs

— more than 10 million in August — may be motivating some to hold out for a better offer.

The net result is that, arguably for the first time in decades, workers up and down the income ladder have leverage. And they are using it to demand not just higher pay but also flexible hours, more generous benefits and better working conditions. A record 4.3 million people quit their jobs in August, in some cases midshift to take a better-paying position down the street.

“It’s like the whole country is in some kind of union renegotiation,” said Betsey Stevenson, a University of Michigan economist who was an adviser to President Barack Obama. “I don’t know who’s going to win in this bargaining that’s going on right now, but right now it seems like workers have the upper hand.”

Rachel Eager spent last fall at home, taking the last class for her bachelor’s degree over Zoom while waiting to be recalled to her job at a New York City after-school program. That call never came.

So Ms. Eager, 25, is looking for work. She has applied for dozens of jobs and had a handful of interviews, so far without luck. But she is taking her time. Ms. Eager says she is still worried about catching Covid-19 — she would prefer to work remotely, and if she does end up taking an in-person job, she wants it to be worth the risk. And she doesn’t want another job with low pay, little flexibility and no benefits.

“Many, many people are realizing that the way things were prepandemic were not sustainable and not benefiting them,” she said. She has been applying for jobs in data analysis, nonprofit management and other fields that would offer better pay, benefits and a sense of purpose.

Ms. Eager, who is vaccinated, said that she had always been careful with money and that she built

savings this year by staying home and socking away unemployment benefits and other aid. “My financial situation is OK, and I think that is 99 percent of the reason that I can be choosy about my job prospects,” she said.

Americans have saved trillions of dollars since the pandemic began. Much of that wealth is concentrated among high earners, who mostly kept their jobs, reduced spending on dining and vacations, and benefited from a soaring stock market. But many lower-income Americans, too, were able to set aside money thanks to the government’s multitrillion-dollar response to the pandemic, which included not only direct cash assistance but also increased food aid, forbearance on mortgages and student loans and an eviction moratorium.

Economists said the extra savings alone aren’t necessarily keeping people out of the labor force. But the cushion is letting people be more picky about the jobs they take, when many have good reasons to be picky.

In addition to health concerns, child care issues remain a factor.

Most schools have resumed in-person classes, but parents in many districts have had to grapple with quarantines or temporary returns to remote learning. And many parents of younger children are struggling to find day care, in part because that industry is dealing with its own staffing crisis.

Liz Kelly-Campanale left her job as a winemaker last year to care for her two children in Portland, Ore. She thought about going back to work when schools resumed in-person instruction this fall. But the Delta variant upended those plans.

“If you have an exposure, all of a sudden your kids are out of school for 10 days,” she said. “For people who have jobs where they can work from



The slow return of workers is causing headaches for the Biden administration, which was counting on a strong economic rebound to give momentum to its political agenda (Photo: Kendrick Brinson for The New York Times)

home, it's maybe a little more feasible, but I can't really drive a forklift around the house."

Ms. Kelly-Campanale, 37, said she might go back to work once her children, now 6 and 3, are vaccinated and the pandemic seems under control. But she said the pandemic has led her to rethink her priorities.

Economists worry that if the pandemic leads many people to opt out of the work force, it could have long-term consequences for economic growth. Rising labor force participation, particularly among women, was a major driver of the strong gains in income and production after World War II. Many economists argue that the reversal of that trend in recent decades has hurt economic growth.

In the shorter term, many economists think that more people will return to work as pandemic-related issues recede and as people deplete their savings.

"Eventually those savings, especially for lower-income people, they're going to run out," said Pablo Villanueva, an economist at UBS. "A lot of people are going to be increasingly unable to stay out of work even if they have some fear of Covid."

Some businesses seem determined to wait them out. Wages have risen, but many employers appear reluctant to make other changes to attract workers, like flexible schedules and better benefits. That may be partly because, for all their complaints about a labor shortage, many companies are finding that they can get by with fewer workers, in some instances by asking customers to accept long waits or reduced service.

"They're making a lot of profits in part because they're saving on labor costs, and the question is how long can that go on," said Julia Pollak, chief economist for the employment site ZipRecruiter. Eventually, she said, customers may get tired of

busing their own tables or sitting on hold for hours, and employers may be forced to give into workers' demands.

Some businesses are already changing how they operate. When Karter Louis opened his latest restaurant this year, he abandoned the industry-standard approach to staffing, with kitchen workers earning low wages and waiters relying on tips. At Soul Slice, his soul-food pizza restaurant in Oakland, Calif., everyone works full time, earns a salary rather than an hourly wage, and receives health insurance, retirement benefits and paid vacation. Hiring still hasn't been easy, he said, but he isn't having the staffing problems that other restaurants report.

**"So much of how I saw myself was tied up in what I did for a living — it was a huge adjustment to all of a sudden not be doing that all the time," she said. "But once I made that adjustment, it also became apparent that there were also benefits to having that work-life balance."**

Restaurant owners wondering why they can't find workers, Mr. Louis said, need to look at the way they treated workers before the pandemic, and also during it, when the industry laid off millions.

"The restaurant industry didn't really have the back of its people," he said.

Still, better pay and benefits alone won't bring back everyone who has left the job market. The steepest drop in labor force participation came among older workers, who faced the greatest risks from the virus. Some may return to work as the health situation improves, but others have simply retired.

And even some nowhere near retirement have made ends meet outside a traditional job.

When Danielle Miess, 30, lost her job at a Philadelphia-area travel agency at the start of the pandemic, it was in some ways a blessing. Some time away helped her realize how bad the job had been for her mental health, and for her finances — her bank balance was negative on the day she was laid off. With federally supplemented unemployment benefits providing more than she made on the job, she said, she gained a measure of financial stability.

Ms. Miess's unemployment benefits ran out in September, but she isn't looking for another office job. Instead, she is cobbling together a living from a variety of gigs. She is trying to build a business as an independent travel agent, while also doing house sitting, dog sitting and selling clothes online. She estimates she is earning somewhat more than the roughly \$36,000 a year she made before the pandemic, and although she

is working as many hours as ever, she enjoys the flexibility.

"The thought of going to an office job 40 hours a week and clocking in at the exact time, it sounds incredibly difficult," she said. "The rigidity of doing that job, feeling like I'm being watched like a hawk, it just doesn't sound fun. I really don't want to go back to that."



Numly™, Inc. and Veterans ASCEND join hands  
to support Military Veterans in their transition to the civilian  
workforce through Peer Coaching and Critical Skills Development

## EMPLOYMENT & TRANSITION

### NUMLY LAUNCHES SOFTWARE TO UPSKILL AND RESKILL MILITARY VETERANS FOR JOBS

Silicon Valley-based Numly™, Inc., a leading provider of NumlyEngage™, an AI-driven, Peer Coaching platform for critical skills, that accelerates employee engagement, performance, and growth for corporate customers, especially in the new normal of hybrid work environment, has developed a software to help veterans and their families to reskill and find a job.

The launch announcement was made at the HR Technology 2021 Conference in Las Vegas earlier this month.

"We are the first Silicon Valley company to launch a Peer-Coaching and Upskilling Network for our Veterans, their spouses, and their families to upskill and reskill, so they can find really good jobs and grow their careers in the civilian space,"

Madhukar Govindaraju, founder and CEO of Numly told indica News.

“We are particularly passionate about this as this is a wonderful way for us to give back to the thousands of Veterans who have served our country,” Govindaraju said. “As we end the 20-year in Afghanistan, Numly’s partnership with Veterans Ascend would be very huge for all employers such as Procter and Gamble, Merck, Ford, GM and others who are looking to bring in Veterans to join their workforce. This is a huge use case for Numly’s industry-leading Peer Coaching SaaS Platform.”

Numly and Veterans ASCEND have announced a multi-year strategic partnership to support military veterans, their spouses, and families in their transition to the civilian workforce, through skills matching, critical skills development, and peer coaching for even greater long-term success.

The partnership aims at making this transition easier and more effective by helping the veterans develop the right kind of skillset required for their new job role, through peer coaching, and aid in finding jobs in high-growth companies that are matched to their skills.

Veterans ASCEND, is an AI-powered Talent Sourcing platform in Simpsonville, South Carolina. Using algorithms, military and civilian occupations are translated into a skills profile that is then instantly matched to employers intentionally looking for skilled military talent.

Veterans ASCEND and Numly™ would provide critical skills development while creating long-term success for nation’s military in transition through peer coaching. Through this partnership, military veterans can choose from Numly’s™ content library of free training according to the Veterans ASCEND press note.

Peer coaching SaaS Platform is part of NumlyEngage™, an AI-driven, and has been developed for critical skills, that accelerates employee engagement, performance, and growth for corporate customers, especially in the new normal of hybrid work environment.

The NumlyEngage™ platform uses its AI-driven Propensity Scoring to automatically match coaches and learners, based on self-evaluation of each employee per skill.

The platform features built-in coaching programs, curated learning content, as well as integrations with third-party learning management systems, making it easy to ramp up and see results in 100 days.

### **When did you develop this idea and the SaaS-based tool?**

Numly was conceived around 2017, after Govindaraju realized the limitations of conventional classroom training and Critical Skills are not a “nice-to-have” but a “must-have” for today’s workforce. They’re the skills of the future.

Through Numly’s platform, users can leverage built-in programs and 3rd party learning content to develop their specific skills.

They can:

1. Select a skill à la carte or choose from a wealth of built-in programs
2. Learn more effectively and contextually with personalized learning paths
3. Receive AI-driven, personalized content
4. Leverage curated content or complement and extend E-learning via 3rd party integrations with WorkDay, CornerStone, Oracle, EdCast, and Coursera



# ¿Did You Know?

## VA, HUD-VASH AND NONPROFIT SECURE SAFE HOUSING FOR OLDER VETERANS

The [Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing \(HUD-VASH\)](#) program is life changing.



After experiencing several financial hardships, Marine Corps Veteran Larry Nelson moved into low-cost housing. His

Florida home turned out to be unsafe. He experienced sleepless nights as rats ran through the house and he had his money stolen.

A cousin in Colorado who came to visit and check in on Nelson realized how dire the situation was and called the Ocala Veterans Affairs Clinic for help. Social worker Bobbie Shaw was assigned to Nelson's case. She leapt into action when she heard Nelson's story.

Shaw knew that Nelson needed a safe place to live, so her first thought was to enroll him in the HUD-VASH program, which would give him a voucher to make market-rate housing affordable.

At the time, HUD-VASH vouchers could be used only for individual housing, such as an apartment. There were no options for HUD-VASH voucher use in congregate settings.

### Group setting preferable after stroke

Shaw and Nelson realized that, because of his age and his diminished ability to care for himself following stroke, he would feel more comfortable living in a group setting. So Shaw instead found an independent family care home for Nelson that perfectly suited his needs.

Through its programs, such as HUD-VASH, VA has developed solid partnerships with nonprofit housing facilities, like VFW Veteran's Village, to address the specific needs of older Veterans.

Nelson lived comfortably at the family care home for a few years. When the owner died from the coronavirus in 2020, the quality of the home took a sharp decline. Nelson was once again living in unsafe conditions.

Shaw realized it was time to change course in finding a suitable home for Nelson. She decided to revisit the possibility of getting him a HUD-VASH voucher that would meet his needs.

### Creating innovative ways to house older Veterans

"Recently, HUD-VASH has been promoting the use of vouchers to assist with congregate living situations," Shaw said. "Those include assisted living facilities and adult foster homes. The local housing authority determines eligibility for rental assistance, issues the voucher and processes the lease. It also makes the monthly payments. It has to agree to let you use the voucher for congregate living."



Shaw saw Nelson’s situation as an opportunity to advocate for older Veterans like him. She petitioned the Ocala Housing Authority to explore a new housing option – congregate settings – that would allow them to serve more Veterans while retaining older Veterans in the HUD-VASH program.

“Rather than discharging Veterans requiring congregate housing from the HUD-VASH program and asking them to search for a family home they couldn’t afford, we could keep them in the HUD-VASH program, move them to a congregate living facility, and provide them with additional support services,” Shaw added.

### **Veteran’s Village a “cruise ship on land”**

Shaw’s petition to the Housing Authority worked and Nelson moved into the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Veteran’s Village in Fort McCoy, Florida.

“The Village was built almost 30 years ago. Veterans have their own room and have meals provided for them,” said Al Lugo, executive director of VFW Veteran’s Village. “They have access to anything they need here, including a community of other Veterans. We like to call the Village a cruise ship on land.”

With support from VA social workers like Shaw, VFW Veteran’s Village has been able to increase the number of residents and provide wraparound services. Physical and occupational therapists, doctors and even barbers come to VFW Veteran’s Village to make services accessible to all Veterans.

Through its programs, such as HUD-VASH, VA has developed solid partnerships with nonprofit housing facilities – like VFW Veteran’s Village – to address the specific needs of older Veterans.

Through their combined efforts, Veterans like Nelson can secure the safe and stable housing they have earned and deserve.



“I didn’t know VA could help me with this kind of thing,” said Nelson. “My cousin is my hero. I am so happy.”

### **More information:**

- Read more about the [HUD-VASH program](#) to determine if you are eligible to receive rental assistance.
- Veterans who are homeless or at risk for homelessness should contact the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 877-4AID-VET (877-424-3838).
- Visit the [VA Homeless Programs website](#) to learn about housing initiatives and other programs for Veterans exiting homelessness.
- For more stories like these, visit the [HPO website](#) and [subscribe to the Homeless Programs Office newsletter](#) to receive monthly updates about programs and supportive services for Veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

American Legion [Resolution No. 357: Mandatory Funding for the Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\) Veterans Affairs \(VA\) Supportive Housing \(HUD-VASH\) Homeless Program](#). Under the HUD-VASH program, the VA screens homeless veterans for eligibility, provides case management services to enrollees, and through HUD obtains housing choice vouchers and distributes them to enrollees. The American Legion continues to support funding for HUD-VASH housing choice vouchers, another effective tool for ending veterans’ homelessness.





# Staff Meetings & Conferences on Employment

*The National Veterans Employment and Education Division* attended virtually, from October 18<sup>th</sup> to October 20<sup>th</sup>, Advisory Committee meetings on the Readjustment of Veterans. The purpose of the meetings was to advise the Department of Veterans Affairs on the effectiveness of the VA's services and benefits in aiding veterans as they separate from their service and transition into civilian life. Subject matter experts from various VA divisions gave presentations on program and service updates. Noteworthy speakers were:

- The VA's Transition Assistance Program & Governance Chief, who detailed the classroom syllabuses and curriculum that separating servicemembers utilize as well as recent program revisions resulting in a 94.6% positive feedback rating for FY 2021.
- The VA's Transitioning Servicemember/ Veteran and Suicide Prevention Center (TASC), who provided a detailed gap analysis in the lack of coverage servicemembers face transitioning from post to civilian life that otherwise exists from post to post, stressing sponsorship and local community efforts as key drivers in rectifying the issue.

*The National Veterans Employment and Education Division* held an after-action meeting with American Legion's Texas State Department, Texas Veterans Commission, and Texas Workforce Commission members to discuss the results of the hybrid career fair held on September 22. 258 Employers and 259 Jobseekers registered for the virtual component while 37 Employers and 115 Jobseekers attended the in-person event. Efforts to further optimize Employer and Jobseeker user interface experiences using the Premier Virtual platform were discussed in order to increase communication and engagement between both groups.

## ECONOMIC NEWS RELEASE

- The national unemployment rate is **5.1 percent** (September 2021)
- Gulf War II veterans' unemployment rate is **3.5 percent** (September 2021)
- Gulf War II women veterans' unemployment rate is **2.1 percent** (September 2021)
- In September 2021, the veteran unemployment rate was **3.9%**. The comparable non-veteran unemployment rate was **4.8%** in September
- Newly discharged veterans claiming benefits totaled **5,569** an increase of **82** from the preceding week.

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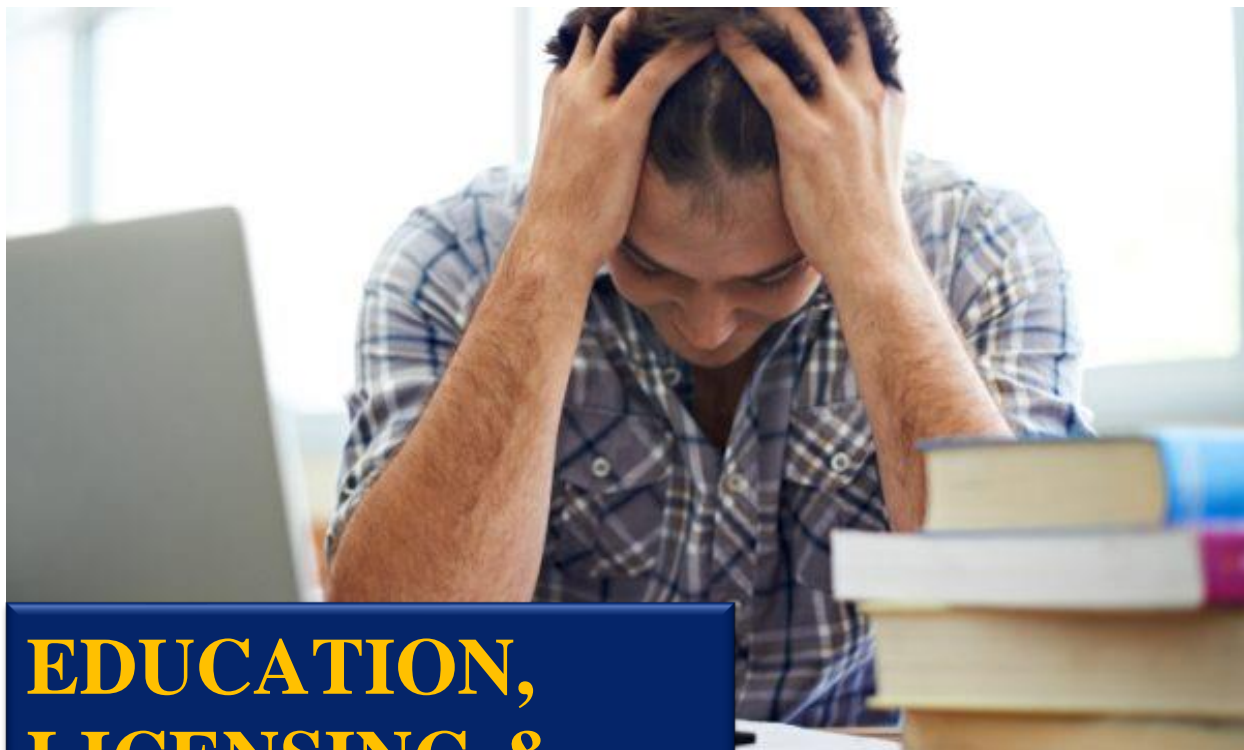
**HOUSEHOLD DATA**

**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	
	Sept. 2020	Sept. 2021	Sept. 2020	Sept. 2021	Sept. 2020	Sept. 2021
<b>Unemployed</b>	568	304	496	266	72	37
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	6.4	3.6	6.4	3.6	6.5	3.3

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**EDUCATION,  
LICENSING &  
CREDENTIALING**

## WHAT TO DO ABOUT YOUR GI BILL OR VETERANS EDUCATION BENEFITS IF YOUR SCHOOL CLOSES

If you're a veteran and you just found out your school (or program) is closing, or the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has disapproved it, it can be a confusing and anxiety-filled time. But there is hope, and you have rights, including new rights that just became effective on Aug. 1, 2021.

You may be able to get part or even all of your GI Bill back so that you can start over at a new school. This also covers other VA education benefits, such as VR&E (formally known as Vocational Rehab). This article details how you might go about getting your VA benefits restored, Pell Grants or student loans fixed, and other resources that help you through this challenging experience.

### GI Bill Benefits

Two recent laws are on the books that affect your rights, meaning those rights are slightly different based on when your school closed. There are three distinct timeframes that determine what you need to do to apply to have your benefits restored:

- 1. Aug. 1, 2021, to Sept. 30, 2023.** If you attended a school that closed (or if the VA disapproved your program) after Aug. 1, 2021, you may qualify for full restoration of the amount of your benefits that were charged for the entire period you attended the program or school that was closed or disapproved. This is sort of technical, but it means you get your GI Bill (or VR&E or Montgomery GI Bill) back, as if you'd never used any of your GI Bill at the school that closed. (Note that this is scheduled to expire in September 2023 unless Congress extends it.) But to get your GI Bill back, you must meet two conditions:
  - You must have been a current student at the school when it closed or was disapproved, or you must have been enrolled at the school within 120 days prior to its closure or disapproval. In other words, if you dropped

out of the school more than 120 days before it closed, you don't get your benefits back.

- Also, if you transfer any credits from the closed school to a new school, it may affect how much of your benefits are restored. Specifically, if you transfer up to 11 credits, that's OK and you still get your full GI Bill back. But if you transfer 12 or more credits from the closed school to a new one, you won't get any of your benefits restored. That's because Congress assumes you've gotten enough of a benefit from transferring your credits. This difference will mean you should think very carefully about whether you want to transfer credits from the closed school to a new school.
- 2. Aug. 16, 2017, to Aug. 1, 2021.** If you attended a school that was closed or disapproved between Aug. 16, 2017, and Aug. 1, 2021, you can get back the amount of GI Bill (or VR&E or other VA education benefit) from only the term, quarter or semester you were attending when your school closed or was disapproved. This means you get back only that one semester (or term) you were in at the moment the school closed. In order to get back that one term worth of benefits, you must meet two conditions:
    - You must have been a current student at the school when it closed or was disapproved – or been enrolled within 120 days prior to its closure or disapproval. In other words, if you dropped out of the school more than 120 days before it closed, you don't get your benefits back.
    - Also, you must not have transferred any of your credits to another school.
  - 3. Jan. 1, 2015, to Aug. 16, 2017.** If you attended a school that was closed or disapproved between Jan. 1, 2015, and Aug. 16, 2017 (a period designed by Congress to

help veterans at ITT Tech and Corinthian Colleges), you may qualify for full restoration of the amount of your benefits that were charged for the entire period you attended the program or school that was closed or disapproved. You must meet two conditions:

- You must have been a current student at the school when it closed or was disapproved – or been enrolled within 120 days prior to its closure or disapproval. In other words, if you dropped out of the school more than 120 days before it closed, you don't get your benefits back.
- Also, you must not have transferred any of your credits to another school.

These might be confusing at first, but the most important thing to know is that you still have options. And you can apply for restoration of entitlement at any time. We can help you with the forms. You can do an online submission using the "Education Benefit Entitlement Restoration Request Due to School Closure or Withdrawal" form, which can be sent through the "Ask A Question" link under the "Contact Us" section of the GI Bill website. Or you can send a hard-copy letter to:

**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Muskogee Regional Processing Office  
P.O. Box 8888  
Muskogee, OK 74402-8888**

What about your housing money? If your school closed only temporarily because of COVID-19, the VA will continue to pay your benefits through the end of the term or 28 days, whichever comes first. In all cases, you get your monthly housing allowance until the end of the term or 120 days after the program closes.

These rights you have are covered by two different laws: School closures (or disapprovals) between August 2021 and September 2023 are covered by Section 1021 of the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020; and school closures or disapprovals between 2015 and 2021

are covered by Section 109 of the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017. These are two laws that we and other veterans organizations fought hard for.

### **Pell Grants and Federal Student Loans**

Aside from GI Bill and VA benefits, you also have rights with your Pell Grants and student loans. You can get your Pell Grants restored as if you'd never gone to school and get your federal student loans erased. You must meet three conditions:

- You were still enrolled (or on an approved leave of absence) when the school closed, or you were enrolled within 120 or 180 days of the school's closure. The time period depends on the date your loans were issued.
- You didn't transfer any credits from the closed school to a "comparable program" at a new school.
- You don't participate in a "teach-out" from your closed school (you'll hear about it from your school) that you complete or are in the process of completing.

You should contact the company that services your federal loan to obtain the documents you will need to fill out to cancel your federal loans. There is more information on the U.S. Department of Education's website [here](#), and free help is available from most veterans organizations.

### **Private Student Loans**

It's more difficult to get private student loans canceled or forgiven, but you might be able to get some of them canceled if you were still enrolled (or on an approved leave of absence) when the school closed.

You also should determine whether your state law provides for cancellation of your private loan, although this is very rare. Contact the company that services your private student loans, which may be different from the company that is servicing your federal loans, to get more information about how you can seek cancellation. Depending on the size of your private loans, you

may want to talk to an attorney about your options.

### **Get Money Back from Your State**

Some states have student tuition recovery funds that will reimburse you for some of the money you lost when your school closed (including GI Bill, Pell Grants and student loans). Find out what your rights are in your state. For example, California has a generous program so long as you were still enrolled (or on an approved leave of absence) when the school closed or you were enrolled within 120 days of your school's closure and your school was required to be approved or registered by the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education.

### **Other Things to Consider**

Watch out for scammers. Be very wary of student debt relief companies and online offers of help. All your rights explained here are free of charge. You don't have to pay anyone to get your rights.

**Find your records.** Make sure you get a complete copy of all your student records in order to ensure you have all the documents you need to establish your eligibility for federal student loan debt relief. You have a right to inspect your student files under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and may request a copy of any documents in your files. Save a copy of your enrollment agreement, your student ledger (a complete financial accounting of all funds paid to the school and amounts you were charged), all documents you signed, any record of your withdrawal or approved leaves of absence, and any emails between you and anyone at the school.

**Don't rush into a new school.** Do not rush into any "teach-out program" and don't rush to transfer credits to a new school. This is an important decision and a big investment -- take the time to decide what is right for you. Remember that if

you transfer a certain number of credits to a new school, you might not get back your GI Bill (or VR&E). Many fraudulent for-profit schools will push you to enroll right away. If they are rushing you, they probably don't have your best interest in mind.

**Carefully consider the options that are best for you.** Research local community college and public colleges. Sometimes, it is worth waiting and applying for these programs, which are often of higher quality than for-profit school programs in which you can enroll immediately. You do not have any immediate obligation to repay your loans. You have at least a six-month grace period on your federal student loans and may ask your private lenders to give you a forbearance while you determine your next steps.

Finding out your school or program is coming to a halt does not have to mean your academic journey is also coming to an end. There are many options to take advantage of to overcome this hurdle, as long as you take the time to know what can be done to fix your situation.

There are many advocates fighting hard for you, and who would be willing to give you additional one-on-one support at no cost to you. Reach out for help, and take it one step at a time.

William Hubbard is vice president for Veterans & Military Policy at Veterans Education Success. Free help for veterans is available at [Help@VetsEdSuccess.Org](mailto:Help@VetsEdSuccess.Org).

### **Keep Up With Your Education Benefits**

Whether you need a guide on how to use your GI Bill, want to take advantage of tuition assistance and scholarships, or get the lowdown on education benefits available for your family, Military.com can help. [Subscribe to Military.com](#) to have education tips and benefits updates delivered directly to your inbox.



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## Staff Meetings & Conferences on Education

*The National Veterans Employment and Education Division* met with staff from the House Veterans Affairs Committee (HVAC) Subcommittee staff and representatives from fellow Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) to discuss **H.R. 4874, The Fly Vets Act**, which would close a loophole in the Post 9/11 GI Bill. The loophole allows flight schools at public schools to charge student veterans high tuition rates, sometimes equaling hundreds of thousands of dollars per student. While tuition at private schools is limited under the current law, tuition at public schools is not restricted.

On September 21, 2021, VE&E testified before the Economic Opportunities (EO) Subcommittee of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee (HVAC) on H.R. 4874, The Fly Vets Act, which would solve the issue by capping tuition at flight schools but also allowing those wishing to pursue flight school to accelerate their education benefits to pay for tuition. Another issue raised in the meeting was the possibility of other third-party training providers using the loophole. The American Legion supports closing the Flight School loophole through [Resolution No. 23: Close the GI Bill Flight School Loophole](#).

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*The National Veterans Employment and Education Division* met with the Department of Veterans' Affairs Education Service staff and representatives from fellow Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) and stakeholders to be briefed on the implementation of The Isakson and Roe Act, education entitlement transfer issues, risk-based surveys, and veterans' education outcome measures. The Isakson and Roe Act was signed into law last year, but some of its provisions are still being implemented. Verification enrollment, one of the few provisions to still be implemented, will require student veterans to confirm their enrollment in programs of education with the VA on a monthly basis. The VA has developed a number of options students can choose from to verify enrollment status, including through a phone call, text message, or online platform.

The American Legion welcomes the VA's efforts to implement a risk-based survey model. The Harry W. Colmery Act, signed into law in 2017, mandated a risk-based survey to replace the VA compliance survey, which performed poorly and failed to provide proper oversight. VA has yet to adopt a risk-based survey model but is currently working with the National Association of State Approving Agencies (NASAA) to develop an institutional risk model. The American Legion has worked closely with NASAA, VA, and other stakeholders to ensure the risk-based model eventually implemented is effective. The American Legion supports the development of a risk-based model through [Resolution No. 11: GI Bill Risk Based Survey](#).

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**!BREAKING  
NEWS!**

The American Legion led the effort to close the 90-10 loophole and was rewarded with the passage of the 2021 Covid relief bill, effectively closing the loophole by amending the Higher Education Act of 1965 but the fight is not over.

Now that this critical piece of legislation has been signed into law it must go through a rule-making process in which the Department of Education (ED) will interpret the language of the law and draft rules and regulation. The process incorporates stakeholders with an interest in the proposed rule and public comments. Ensuring that the language in the rules and regulation is explicit is critical. The VE&E Division of The American Legion is actively preparing for the initial public hearing on **October 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>**. Information on that public hearing and the rule-making process for 90-10 can be found at: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/10/04/2021-21505/negotiated-rulemaking-committee-public-hearings>

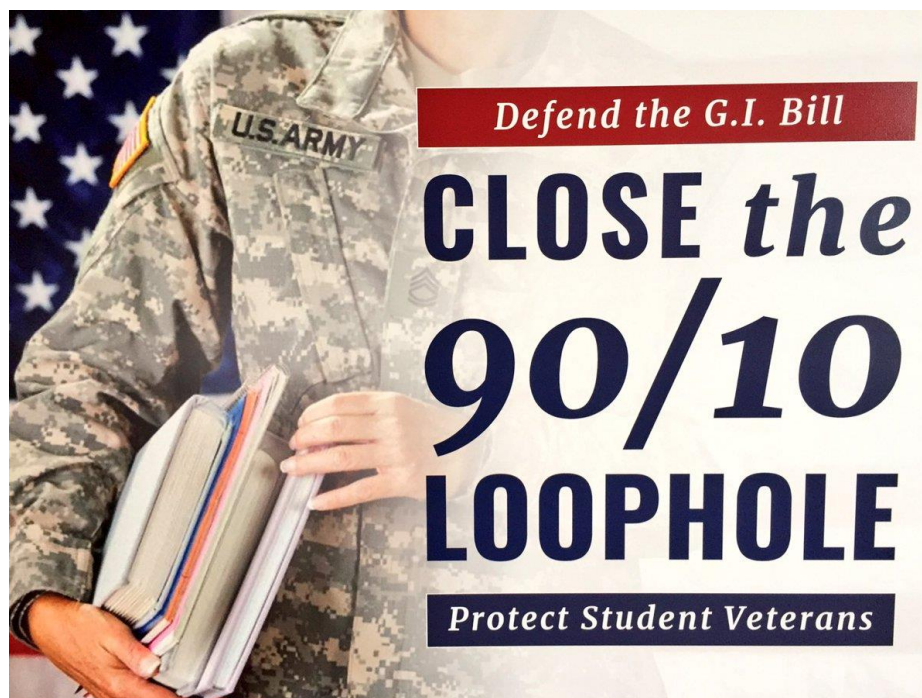
Those wishing to post a public comment and contribute to The American Legions efforts can do so by posting a public comment using the link provided above. Simply click **“SUBMIT A FORMAL COMMENT”** highlighted in green at the top of the page and follow the instructions.

Prior to closing the 90/10 Loophole, only Title IV federal student aid programs counted as taxpayer dollars on the “90-side” of the 90/10 calculation. DOD educational benefits such as Tuition Assistance and VA education benefits counted as private dollars on the “10-side” of the 90/10 calculation. This allowed schools to collect federal funds classified as private revenue.

While this was not a new issue, developments in higher education made the closure of this 90-10 loophole of critical importance to veterans and military families. In December 2016, the Department of Education issued a report that 191 colleges receive more than 90 percent of their revenue from federal student aid, GI Bill education benefits, and the Defense Department education programs.

This is an issue because the schools primarily financed through federally sourced funds have no incentive to compete with other educational institutions to attract students who pay for their education through other means. Market forces are critical to ensuring schools provide high-quality educations to student veterans.

Through [Resolution No. 15: Support Greater GI Bill Outcomes by Closing 90-10 Loophole](#), The American Legion supports not only the closing of the 90-10 loophole in the intent of the law but also in the implementation by executive agencies.





## HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING

Stephen Peck, left, president and chief executive of the nonprofit U.S. VETS, and Brian D'Andrea, a senior vice president at Century Housing, talk about proposed housing for veterans at the VA campus in West L.A. in 2019. (Photo: Al Seib / Los Angeles Times)

### EDITORIAL: WILL HOMELESS VETERANS EVER GET HOUSING ON LAND SET ASIDE FOR THEM?

Homeless veterans, mentally disabled or traumatized as a result of their service, and their advocates waged a long legal battle to force the Department of Veterans Affairs to stop using parts of the sprawling VA campus in West L.A. for non-veteran enterprises and return the campus to the use for which it was originally intended: housing veterans.

In 2015, former VA Secretary Robert McDonald halted his department's legal bickering and entered into a settlement with the veterans. That led to an ambitious master plan to transform much of the 387-acre campus from a clinical setting, dominated by a hospital on the south end and decrepit unused buildings on the north end,

into a vibrant community of at least 1,200 units of permanent supportive housing for homeless and at-risk veterans along with gathering spots. The health centers would still be there but the campus would get a warm infusion of cafes, stores, barbershops and hair salons to attract all veterans.

That was 2016.

Five years later, a grand total of 54 units of permanent supportive housing for homeless veterans are open. (There is also temporary homeless housing on the campus.) The master plan timeline called for about 480 units to be constructed by September 2020. As the inspector



general pointed out, the 54 units now open constitute 11% of what was expected to be open in 2020.

So what happened? A lot of things.

The VA had to conduct an environmental impact study of the entire campus. That took two years and wasn't finalized until September 2019. A year before that — in November 2018 — the VA hired a consortium of three developers to function together as a principal developer to oversee the implementation of the master plan.

The principal developer group was partially hamstrung by the discovery that utilities under the VA grounds — water, sewer, and stormwater systems — needed to be fixed to create 1,200 units of housing, and the repairs would cost between \$10 million and \$14 million. The VA would have to pay for it. But the VA had to apply for the funds within its own system. Repairs are now underway.

But the most difficult part has been raising the money to build the housing. According to the inspector general's report, as of July 2021, the principal developer had secured just over a quarter of the funds necessary to build its initial phase of housing. One official of the principal developer group says it has since raised millions more in state and philanthropic funds, and it is waiting on an additional \$50 million in applications to various financial programs.

And that is the larger problem — waiting on money. Financing permanent supportive housing relies on a multitude of sources, from local, county and state governments, along with extremely competitive tax credits or tax-exempt bonds. The availability comes around only a few times a year. Get rejected in one round and sometimes a developer has to wait another year to apply. The current systems for doling out public

dollars are bound up in bureaucracy and cumbersome rules that slow projects and make them more expensive to build. If we want to have affordable housing everywhere, we need to make it easier for qualified developers to get financing.

Meanwhile, the principal developer has now advanced its community plan, which is supposed to be a more realistic take on the master plan. Now the developer is saying that 237 units of housing will be completed in 2022 and 682 units will be completed in 2027. Veterans will have to wait until 2031 for all 1,200 units to be done.

And what about the town center with its cafes and stores? The principal developer says those elements remain in the new community plan. Some veteran activists are skeptical of that. Veterans have repeatedly said they want shops, amenities and a sense of community on the VA campus. The principal developer must ensure the town center remains in the plan.

It's unacceptable that Southern California will have to wait another decade for the promised 1,200 units of housing on the VA campus, while about 3,900 veterans sleep on the street or in shelters. Veteran homelessness is a national disgrace, and it's all the more galling when there are hundreds of acres of prime real estate in Los Angeles that could be turned into housing if only there were more urgency at all levels.

On December 8, 2015, The American Legion testified before the Subcommittee on Health Committee on Veterans' Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives on **H.R. 3484: Los Angeles Homeless Veterans Leasing Act of 2015**. This bill would have allowed veterans who are currently homeless to relocate to a more secure space on the campus of the West Los Angeles Healthcare System for the purpose of receiving housing, health care, education, family support, vocational training, and other needed services.

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**TAKANO, BASS, LIEU, & BROWNLEY**  
**APPLAUD SECRETARY MCDONOUGH'S MOVE TO HOUSE**  
**HOMELESS VETERANS IN WEST LA**

House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Chairman Mark Takano (D-Calif.), Rep. Karen Bass (D-Calif.), Rep. Ted Lieu (D-Calif.), and Subcommittee on Health Chairwoman Julia Brownley (D-Calif.) applauded Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Denis McDonough's announcement that the West LA VA Medical Center will provide permanent housing for all of the veterans currently living in the San Vicente encampment before the county clears the sidewalk on November 1<sup>st</sup>.

Additionally, VA announced that it will work to get 500 additional LA area homeless veterans into permanent housing by the end of the year. Earlier this month, Chairman Takano invited Secretary McDonough to visit VA facilities and meet with veterans in the Inland Empire and the Greater Los Angeles Area. During their visit to the West LA VA, Chairman Takano, Rep. Bass, and Rep. Lieu joined the Secretary for a tour of the San Vicente encampment and spoke with homeless veterans, advocates, and VA staff about efforts to address veteran homelessness in the Los Angeles area.

"My heart is full given today's announcement that VA has plans to permanently house the homeless veterans living outside the West LA VA, and I look forward to learning more about VA's efforts," said **Chairman Takano**. "Earlier this month, I invited Secretary McDonough to tour the San Vicente encampment and speak with homeless veterans themselves—I'm grateful that the Secretary took these conversations to heart and is following up with VA action when these veterans need it most. I know that together we can continue to tackle the biggest problems facing veterans in the LA area, including the monumental effort to end veteran homelessness."

"We've been calling for action to assist the unhoused veterans sleeping next to the VA in West Los Angeles. Finally, we have a White House willing to listen," said **Rep. Bass**. "Secretary McDonough was willing to answer our call—he was willing to have us show him the situation and then work with us as we follow through with action. When he toured the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System

earlier this month, my colleagues and I urged him to take bold and swift action on the crisis on our hands here in Los Angeles. What the Secretary is announcing today is ambitious but the exact kind of leadership needed to get folks in homes. This crisis is not going to go away overnight, it's going to take concerted efforts at all levels of government in collaboration with outside groups to get this done. Addressing this crisis cannot wait. Thank you Secretary McDonough for your action today."

"I'm pleased that, following his visit to the West LA VA earlier this month, Secretary McDonough is taking concrete steps to address veteran homelessness in Los Angeles," said **Rep. Lieu**. "During the visit, I urged the Secretary to prioritize veteran homelessness at the agency, and specifically to focus on Southern California. He reaffirmed his and the Biden Administration's commitment to this effort and today's announcement reflects that. In Congress, Veterans' Affairs Committee Chair Mark Takano and I have worked tirelessly on this issue and will continue to do so. From the *West Los Angeles Leasing Act of 2016* spurring redevelopment of the VA to include veteran housing to the *West Los Angeles VA Campus Improvement Act of 2021* ensuring the West LA has access to money for veteran homelessness programs, we're continuing to champion our veterans. I will continue to work with the VA and local and state officials to make the necessary improvements to help our nation's heroes. No one who has served our country in uniform should ever be without a roof over their heads."

"I am profoundly grateful for the service and sacrifice made by our nation's veterans, and it is a stain on our nation that so many of them are unhoused and living on the streets. This ongoing challenge has only been made worse as the pandemic continues to put economic stress on those barely making ends meet," said **Rep. Brownley**. "I applaud Secretary McDonough and President Biden's aggressive efforts and bold initiatives to address homelessness amongst our veteran population with the urgency that this issue demands. Their leadership is the action we need in the fight to end homelessness, and it is a crucial step in ensuring that all of our veterans

have the services and resources, including access to safe and permanent housing, that they need.”

American Legion [Resolution No. 141: Department of Veterans Affairs Enhanced-Use Leasing](#) (EUL). Whereas the EUL activity must contribute to the mission of VA; be consistent with, and not adversely affect VA’s mission; enhance the use(s) of the property to be leased; and be in exchange for fair consideration

to VA as determined by the Secretary; or result in a demonstrable improvement in services to eligible veterans in the geographic service-delivery area in which the property is located, The American Legion supports a publicly transparent EUL process in consultation with veteran service organizations and stakeholders and opposes any EUL that does not specifically provide any obvious and permanent benefits, resources or services to the veterans’ community.

## Staff Meetings & Conferences on Homelessness

*The National Veterans Employment and Education Division* participated in a meeting with Katherine Stewart, National Coordinator for the Veteran Justice Outreach (VJO) program, U.S. Department of Veterans’ Affairs (VA) to discuss the VJO program and H.R. Bill 5529 – *Veterans Justice Outreach Improvement Act*. Also present was Jennifer Hunt of the Veterans’ Health Administration (VHA). According to the VA, the mission of the Veterans Justice Outreach program is to identify justice-involved veterans and contact them through outreach. The goal is to provide access to VA services for this group of veterans at the earliest possible point. The VJO program accomplishes this by building and maintaining partnerships between the VA and key elements of the criminal justice system.<sup>1</sup> H.R. Bill 5529 seeks to direct the Secretary of VA to make certain improvements to the VJO program such as spreading awareness and understanding of the program through outreach, increasing the number of and providing additional training to VJO Specialists responsible for supporting justice-involved veterans, establishing performance goals and measures, and reporting on the availability and efficacy of veterans treatment courts (VTCs).<sup>2</sup>

During the meeting, we also addressed the impact of the pandemic on the VJO program. Mrs. Stewart stated the pandemic had a significant impact. Specifically, it limited VJO Specialists ability to conduct outreach to local jails, prisons, and other facilities where veterans may be housed. To overcome this barrier, electronic devices such as iPads may be loaned to those institutions to facilitate virtual outreach and communication with justice-involved veterans. Additionally, we discussed VTCs, which are community initiatives that work to help veterans get treatment for their unique clinical needs, within the context of the criminal justice system. Local courts administer these programs and tailor program elements to their jurisdictions. Due to the unique concerns regarding justice-involved veterans such as higher prevalence to post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, substance abuse, and alcoholism, all of which may lead to homelessness and/or violent behavior, VTCs were established to address the clinical needs of these veterans.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Veterans’ Affairs. VA Homeless Programs. *Veterans Justice Outreach Program*. <https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/VJO.asp>

<sup>2</sup> Miller-Meeks, Mariannette (R-IA-2). H.R. 5529 Veterans Justice Outreach Improvement Act. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/5529/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22%22%5D%7D&r=49&s=1>

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Office of Health Equity. Justice Involved Veterans and Treatment Court. [https://www.va.gov/HEALTHY/Justice\\_Involved\\_Veterans\\_and\\_Treatment\\_Court.asp](https://www.va.gov/HEALTHY/Justice_Involved_Veterans_and_Treatment_Court.asp)

American Legion [Resolution No. 145: Veteran Treatment Courts](#). As VTCs are hybrid drug and mental health courts and have evolved out of the growing need for a treatment court model designed specifically for justice-involved veterans to maximize efficiency and economize resources while making use of the distinct military culture consistent among veterans, The American Legion urges the VA to continue funding the expansion of VTCs.

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*The National Veterans Employment and Education Division* reviewed the [United States Senate, Committee on Appropriations, Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\), and Related Agencies fiscal year \(FY\) 2022 Appropriations Bill](#) which was released this week. The bill contains appropriations for several veteran programs. Most notably, the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program, commonly referred to as HUD-VASH.

This bill would allow the Secretary of HUD to allocate up to \$30 million for public housing agencies that need additional funds to administer their section 8 tenant-based rental assistance program, to include HUD-VASH. Additionally, up to \$5 million shall be allocated for rental assistance and associated administrative fees for Tribal HUD-VASH to serve Native American veterans that are homeless or at-risk of homelessness living in or near a reservation or other Indian areas. However, there are certain provisions such as the amount made available shall be for renewal grants to recipients that received assistance under prior Acts of the program. Additionally, grant recipients shall report to the Secretary on utilization of such rental assistance and other program data, as prescribed by the Secretary.

The bill would also allocate \$50 million for incremental rental voucher assistance for use through a supported housing program administered in conjunction with the VA, providing the Secretary of HUD makes funding available. Additionally, included are provisions for the Secretary of HUD to waive or specify alternate requirements.

Furthermore, the bill would allocate \$65 million for the Self-Help and Assisted Homeownership Opportunity Program authorized under the Housing and Opportunity Program Extension Act of 1996. This funding will remain available until September 30, 2024. Of the \$65 million, \$4 million shall be for a program to rehabilitate and modify homes of disabled and low-income veterans<sup>4</sup>, as authorized by the Carl Levin and Howard P. “Buck” McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 ([PL 113-291](#)).

As stated in American Legion [Resolution No. 332: Support Funding for the Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\) and Veterans Affairs \(VA\) Supportive Housing \(HUD-VASH\) Homeless Program](#), the American Legion believes the nation has a responsibility to ease the difficulties experienced by America’s veterans and HUD-VASH is a prominent element of the VA’s plan to eliminate veteran homelessness.

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*The National Veterans Employment and Education Division* participated in a webinar hosted by the VA National Center on Homelessness Among Veterans. The webinar was titled “Healthcare for Women

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<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. FY 2021 Veterans housing Rehabilitation and Modification Pilot Program (VHRMP). *The purpose of the Veterans Housing Rehabilitation and Modification Pilot Program (VHRMP) is to explore the potential benefits of awarding grants to nonprofit organizations to rehabilitate and modify the primary residence of veterans who are low-income and have disabilities. The funds made available under this program will be awarded competitively.*

[https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/spm/gmomgmt/grantsinfo/fundingopps/fy2021](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/spm/gmomgmt/grantsinfo/fundingopps/fy2021)

Veterans: Our Challenges and Opportunities.” The webinar explained the mission of the Veterans’ Health Administration’s (VHA) Womens’ Health Program for the provision of care to women veterans; identified the unique needs and experiences of women veterans at risk of becoming homeless; and described the structure to the program and expectations for VA staff and community providers in providing care.

Women veterans are becoming increasingly more visible within the VA. The VHA reported that 30% of all new enrollees are women. Additionally, in fiscal year 2021 there were more than 870,000 women enrolled in VA healthcare. According to a Wounded Warriors Initiative Report published in 2021, a survey conducted with women transitioning out of the military revealed that the top three challenges they faced were coping with mental health issues (61%), financial stress (30%), and coping with mental health issues related to military sexual trauma (25%). The presence of mental disorders (mental illness and/or substance-related disorders) is the strongest predictor of becoming homeless after discharge from active duty.<sup>5</sup>

The VHA Womens’ Health Program serves as a trusted resource and works to ensure women veterans experience timely, high quality comprehensive care in a sensitive and safe environment at all points of care. At the national level, the program consists of three different components: reproductive health, comprehensive health, and health education. The comprehensive health component comprises most services offered, which include mental health, primary and specialty care, and field support. As women veterans represent one of the fastest growing populations in both military service and the veteran community, these services are important components to end homelessness among women veteran and their families.<sup>6</sup>

American Legion **[Resolution No. 17: Women Veterans Homelessness Resource Provisions and Protections](#)**. Women veterans are twice as likely to become homeless compared to civilian women who did not serve in the military. Additionally, trauma before, during, and after military service is a common factor among women veteran experiencing homelessness. The American Legion supports efforts to provide additional resources for women veterans and their families to prevent and end homelessness.

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*The National Veterans Employment and Education Division* met with Mr. Waylon J. Bailey, Defense Fellow, Office of U.S. Congressman Anthony G. Brown (MD-04) on September 23, 2021 to discuss a draft bill on the VA Home Loan Guaranty program. The draft legislation was going to be presented during a House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity Legislative Hearing on September 21, 2021; however, was held back by the Office of Congressman Brown for further study and input from the VA and Veteran Service Organizations.

This week, Mr. Bailey shared a working copy of the suggested changes to the bill with VE&E and Legislative Division staff members for review and feedback. The changes were a result of feedback provided by Veteran Service Organizations to include The American Legion, and from the VA. One of the changes addresses situations during which two or more veterans use the loan guaranty benefit for one loan. VE&E staff is in the process of reviewing the suggested changes and will provide feedback and recommendations accordingly.

As stated in American Legion **[Resolution No. 329: Support Home Loan Guaranty Program](#)**, the American Legion reaffirms strong support for the VA Home Loan Guaranty program and supports legislative efforts that will improve and strengthen the program’s ability to serve America’s veterans

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<sup>5</sup> Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Inspector General. Homeless Incidence and Risk Factors for Becoming Homeless in Veterans. (May 2012). Conclusions, page. IV. <https://www.va.gov/oig/pubs/VAOIG-11-03428-173.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Wounded Warriors Initiative Report. Executive Summary. <https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/media/tt0ftq4a/wwp-women-warriors-initiative-report-2021.pdf>



## **Founders First CDC Announces Micro Investments for Veteran Entrepreneurs**

Founders First CDC (Founders First), a 501(c)3 non-profit that empowers expansion and job creation in diverse founder-led, revenue-generating businesses, announced its 2021 Steve Fund, a grant program to support U.S. veteran business owners.

The Steve Fund makes micro-investments in veterans who are running small businesses. The award, which will be granted prior to Veterans' Day, was inspired by Founder's First CEO Kim Folsom's brother, US Navy veteran Steven Tadlock. The \$25,000 fund will make its first investments in 50 veterans who are running employer-based small businesses.

There are over 2.5 million veteran majority-owned businesses in the U.S., according to the most recent U.S. Census Bureau's survey of

small business owners. In the same report, the SBA reported veteran owned small businesses employ more than 5 million people in the U.S., generate revenue of \$1.14 trillion, and an annual payroll of \$195 billion.

The judging committee for the Steve Grant includes a panel of distinguished veterans representing multiple branches of service, with regional lead judges including:

**Northern U.S.:** Retired President, Army and Navy Academy, Retired U.S. Army General Art Bartell

**Eastern U.S.:** Senior Vice President of Military and Government Affairs at National University System, Former U.S. Navy LT Cmdr Kimberly Mitchell

**Western U.S.:** Deputy, Chief Transformation Office, National University System, Retired U.S. Marine Retired Sergeant Major Chermaine Harrell

**Southern U.S.:** Director of Entrepreneurship & Small Business, BCL of Texas, Former U.S. Airforce Staff Sergeant Brian Marshall

“The armed forces is a melting pot of diverse people called to serve something greater than themselves. That diversity, drive and commitment translates to dedicated entrepreneurship for many veterans, and programs like this help support veteran business owners around the country,” said Senior Vice President of Military and Government Affairs at National University System, Former U.S. Navy veteran, LT Cmdr Kimberly Mitchell.

Applications are now open and will close on Oct. 29, 2021. Businesses must have a U.S. military veteran CEO, president or owner.

“Veteran-owned businesses are a critical contributor to the small businesses community,” says Kim Folsom, Founder of Founders First CDC. “Our mission is to provide the funding, know-how and social capital to help diverse-led companies grow to \$5M+ revenue, create premium-wage jobs and economic impact in their communities. We are launching the Steve Fund this year in honor of my brother, who was a veteran and avid supporter of veteran-owned businesses.”

[Click here to learn more and apply.](#)

The American Legion fully supports private-sector initiatives and efforts to invest in veteran-owned small businesses, as seen in [Resolution No. 204: Support building a veterans small business resource community of private volunteers.](#)

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## HOW THE DLA PIVOTED TO WORK SUPPLY CHAINS DURING COVID

The Defense Logistics Agency is in charge of moving \$40 billion worth of goods around the world per year, but when COVID hit and supply chains started moving in fits and starts, the organization had to start changing to get goods delivered on time.

DLA works on delivering everything from food to fuel generators to respirators, all important components of the supply chain during COVID.

“When COVID came along, initially, the early efforts were really focused on the operational support,” Rear Adm. Doug Noble, director of logistics operations for DLA, said on *Federal Insights: Supply Chain*. “From a DLA perspective that quickly evolved to things like personal protective equipment and ventilators. We’ve done over 325 million test kits, over 5 billion sets of gloves, 70 million N-95 masks,

almost 300 million surgical masks, and 200 million gowns and just shy of 6,000 ventilators.”

Noble said DLA worked closely with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to find ways to deliver quickly in emergency situations.

“We quickly found ourselves evolving into a role of providing support to FEMA for their mission assignments, but also maturing our relationship with [the Department of] Health and Human Services to provide those items,” Noble said. “As time progressed a little bit further, we were able to get the supply chain to the point where we could start working on restocking the Strategic National Stockpile with all that critical PPE. As a result of working through that process, we have agreements now with HHS where we’ve done about \$5 billion to replenish that Strategic National Stockpile.”

Noble said there is still about \$7 billion more that needs to be restocked.

As DLA and the nation as a whole builds back its supply chains, Noble said the Defense Department is rethinking its security.

Reliance on China, Russia and other countries, as well as threats from terrorism and extreme weather can all disrupt critical goods from getting to their destinations.

Noble said DLA is working to identify what are the most critical supply chains so they can be protected in the future.

“Can you sift through all that data and that information to know where you really need to prioritize? And to identify those critical items, we engage through the services to pick out those items. They tell us what weapon systems are their critical key weapon systems,” Noble said. “Through the configuration management of those systems we’re able to identify what the key components and the key parts are that would render a weapon system inoperable if the parts weren’t available.”

DLA is also working on the ability to surge a supply chain when needed. Noble said that DLA is partnering with companies to increase supplies even when they aren’t in short supply at the time.

“We have a program that we call our war stopper program, where we address critical needs across multiple supply chains that normally it wouldn’t be economically feasible or supportable to stock all these items because they’re the ‘just-in-case’ items,” he said. “It just would be cost prohibitive to try and maintain all that capability all the time. But through innovative contracting strategies with vendors, we do things like paying a small insurance premium to reserve capacity capability so that we can surge.”

The American Legion requests mandatory adoption of the VETS First acquisition contracting program by the Department of Defense to provide veteran-owned businesses with ample opportunity to compete for federal procurement opportunities, as seen in [Resolution No. 13: Mandatory use of the Veterans First Contracting Program by The Department of Defense.](#) Doing so will not only provide unprecedented economic opportunities for veterans, but will provide additional security to critical domestic supply chains.





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## Staff Meetings & Conferences on Small Business

*The National Veterans Employment and Education Division* attended a U.S House Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Regulations Hearing “Global Supply Chains and Small Business Trade Challenges.” This meeting included testimony from small business leaders, including veteran small business owners, about how supply chain chokepoints and shortages adversely impact their businesses. This testimony will inform future Legion action and resolution development on supply chains. Panelists for the event included: Kevin Loe, Director of Customer Engagement at Redi-Rock International; Chris O’Brien, Chief Commercial Officer of C.H. Robinson; Christine Lantinen, President and Owner of Maud Borup Inc.; and John “Chuck” Fowke, President of Homes by John C. Fowke Inc. testifying on Behalf of the National Association of Home Builders.

Kevin Loe expressed support for the State Trade Expansion Program, highlighting how the policy enabled his organization to expand operations and increase revenue dramatically. Chris O’Brien highlighted how trucking and freight costs are the highest priority for remediating given their cascading impact on delivery of many other goods and services. Christine Lantinen underscored how the labor shortage has discursively impacted her ability to expand her business and advocated for greater incentives to bring retirees back into the labor force. Chuck Fowke discussed the impact of increased lumber pricing on the housing industry while pushing for congress and the administration to relax restrictions on the trade of foreign imports that are used to build housing.

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*The National Veterans Employment and Education Division* attended a briefing held by Business Forward with U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo focusing on how President Biden’s Build Back Better agenda aims to assist U.S. small businesses. The Secretary discussed a wide variety of issues from the hiring shortage to vaccination mandates. The Secretary emphasized the critical need for investments in childcare and job training to help bring workers back into the labor force. The Secretary also discussed current tax proposals and it’s intention to level the playing field while providing tax incentives for clean energy development. The secretary also provided an update on current efforts to remediate the supply chain crisis, emphasizing the administration’s efforts to expand logistical efforts.

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# CAREER FAIRS

**CAREER FAIRS: DO’S AND DON’TS**

The American Legion holds sponsored Career Fairs, Job Training Workshops, and Interview Skills Training across the country. Additionally, through Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) or goodwill, The American Legion has a presence in Hiring Events held nationally. The primary purpose during these events is to serve as a resource to educate veterans of their benefits and offer avenues for veterans to secure gainful employment. Leaving a positive impression on the event organizers helps to promote The American Legion and ensures continued participation in future endeavors. In contrast, a negative image significantly impacts The American Legion’s objectives. Here is a list of best practices and faux pas to keep in mind before attending an upcoming event:

DO	DON’T
Come prepared with flags, banners, tables skirts, information materials, sign-in sheets, and decorations that professionally represent The American Legion at its booth.	Hold back on brochures and pamphlets. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry at least 25 copies of each for smaller events and at least 50 copies for large job fairs.</li> </ul>

Come adequately staffed with no less than two and a maximum of four volunteers.	
Dress in business attire.	
Actively engage with attendees to offer solutions to identified problems and communicate available resources, such as Legion pamphlets and other services available to veterans.	Solicit membership or donations from attendees
Visit and interact with other employer booth representatives to learn about position offerings and acquire a point of contact resource for The American Legion.	
Meet with the Job Fair organizers	
Provide an After-Action Report of job fair results detailing the number of employers and job seekers.	

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**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.*

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# LEGISLATION TRACKING

## EDUCATION, LICENSING & CREDENTIALING PORTFOLIO

**H.R. 5545 - Responsible Education Mitigating Options and Technical Extensions (REMOTE) Act:** This draft bill would extend expiring provisions established to support student veterans using educational entitlements during the pandemic.

Status: 10/08/21 - Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on the Budget

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

**H.R. 5509: Student Veteran COVID-19 Protection Act of 2021:** This draft bill would extend expiring provisions established to support student veterans using educational entitlements during the pandemic.

Status: 10/08/21 - Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality-of-Service member and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher 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: 7/14/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Health

[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: 9/07/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Health

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

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## **EMPLOYMENT & TRANSITION PORTFOLIO**

**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](#)

**H.R.447 - National Apprenticeship Act of 2021:** To amend the Act of August 16, 1937 (commonly referred to as the "National Apprenticeship Act") and expand the national apprenticeship system to include

apprenticeships, youth apprenticeships, and pre-apprenticeship registered under such Act, to promote the furtherance of labor standards necessary to safeguard the welfare of apprentices, and for other purposes.

Status: 02/25/2021 - Received in the Senate and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

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

**H.R.3582 - Veteran Employment Recovery Act:** This bill increases the work opportunity tax credit in 2021 for the hiring of certain disabled or unemployed veterans.

Status: 05/28/2021 – Referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means

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

**S.2274 - Federal Cybersecurity Workforce Expansion Act:** To authorize the Director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency to establish an apprenticeship program and to establish a pilot program on cybersecurity training for veterans and members of the Armed Forces transitioning to civilian life, and for other purposes.

Status: 06/24/2021 – Read twice and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

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

**H.R.4552 - Veterans’ Agricultural Apprenticeship Act of 2021:** To amend title 5, United States Code, to modify specific requirements concerning service and retirement for veterans’ Preference for federal hiring.

Status: 09/08/2021 – Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

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

**H.R.143 - HERO Transition from Battlespace to Workplace Act of 2021:** To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a tax credit to encourage private employers to hire veterans, to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the reasonable efforts an employer may make under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act with respect to hiring veterans, and for other purposes.

Status: 03/08/2021 – Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

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

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## **HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING PORTFOLIO**

**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](#)

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## **SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO**

**H.R. 4515 - Small Business Development Center Cyber Training Act of 2021:** 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 No. 12: Cybersecurity Protections for Veteran-Owned Small Businesses](#)

**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 Committee on Entrepreneurship

[Resolution No. 12: Cybersecurity Protections for Veteran-Owned Small Businesses](#)

**H.R.5354 - Veterans Jobs Opportunity Act:** This bill would establish a small startup tax credit for veterans, military spouses, army reservists and national guard members seeking to start small businesses.

Status: 9/27/2021 – Introduced in the House Committee on Ways and Means

[Resolution No. 14: Enhancing the Work Opportunity Tax Credit \(WOTC\) for Veteran Workers](#)

**S. 2812 - Veterans Jobs Opportunity Act:** This bill would establish a small startup tax credit for veterans, military spouses, army reservists and national guard members seeking to start small businesses.

Status: 9/27/2021 – Referred to the Senate Committee on Finance

[Resolution No. 14: Enhancing the Work Opportunity Tax Credit \(WOTC\) for Veteran Workers](#)

## ACTION TAKEN ON LEGISLATION

### EDUCATION, LICENSING & CREDENTIALING PORTFOLIO

**Draft Bill - VET Student Loan Act:** This draft bill would eliminate the time limits on many veterans' education benefits retroactively.

Status: Draft – Not yet introduced

Action: Bill Reviewed - Support

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

**Draft Bill - Boldly Repaying America's Veterans with Education Act (BRAVE Act):** This draft bill would amend Section 108(f) of the Internal Revenue Service Code to eliminate the taxability of discharged student loans for veterans who died or were left permanently disabled as a result of their service.

Status: Draft – Not yet introduced

Action: Bill Reviewed - Support

[Resolution No. 347: Veterans Education Debt Forgiveness](#)

**Draft Legislation on Work Study for Half-Time Students:** To amend title 38, United States Code, to extend eligibility for a certain work-study allowance paid by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to certain individuals who pursue programs of rehabilitation, education, or training on at least a half-time basis.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

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

**Draft Legislation on Repay MGIB:** To amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs repays members of the Armed Forces for certain contributions made by such members towards Post-9/11 Educational Assistance.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

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

**Draft Legislation on Death GI Bill Transfer:** To amend title 38, United States Code to provide for the transfer of entitlement to educational assistance under Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program of Department of Veterans Affairs when an eligible individual dies after approval of transfer and before transferring all of the individual's entitlement, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

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

**Draft Legislation on Extend FRY After Discharge:** To amend title 38, United States Code, to expand eligibility for the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship to include spouses and children of individuals who die from a service-connected disability within 120 days of serving in the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

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

**Draft legislation on Extend VRE Time:** To extend the delimiting period for certain individuals to use educational assistance benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

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

**Draft Legislation on SCRA for Education:** "To amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to establish protections under that Act for a member of the Armed Forces who leaves a course of education, paid for with certain educational assistance, to perform certain service."

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

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

**Draft Legislation on Student Childcare Voucher:** "To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to pay to certain veterans, who receive certain educational assistance furnished by the Secretary, a weekly stipend for child care services."

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

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



**Draft Legislation on Prohibit CH. 35 for HS:** To amend title 38, United States Code, to prohibit the use of entitlement to educational assistance under the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program for secondary school education.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

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

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## **EMPLOYMENT & TRANSITION PORTFOLIO**

**Draft Legislation on WARTAC Report:** To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to report on the Warrior Training Advancement Course of the Veterans Benefit Administration.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

[Resolution No. 105: Support and Expand Warrior Transition Advancement Course \(WARTAC\)](#)

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## **HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING PORTFOLIO**

**Draft Legislation on Homeless Grant Elimination of Matching:** Adjustment of Grants Awarded by the Secretary of Veteran Affairs for Comprehensive Service Programs to serve homeless veterans.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

What's Next:

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

**Draft Legislation on Eliminate Loan Limitations:** To amend title 38, United States Code, to eliminate the Freddie Mac conforming loan limitation for loans made to veterans with remaining guaranty or insurance loan entitlement under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

What's Next:

[Resolution No. 314: Support Elimination of the VA Home Loan Funding Fee](#)

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**Draft Legislation on SSVF Report Requirement:** To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a report on the shallow subsidy program under the supportive services for veteran families program, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

What's Next:

[Resolution No. 340: Support Permanent Authorization for the Supportive Services for Veteran Families \(SSVF\) Program](#)

**Draft Legislation on Homelessness Substance Abuse Pilot:** To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program on substance use and alcohol use disorder recovery for homeless veterans, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

What's Next:

Resolution: *Pending Draft Resolution*

**Draft Legislation on Increase Homelessness Per Diem:** To amend title 38, United States Code, to adjust the rate of per diem payments provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to grantees that provide services to homeless veterans.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21, Provided Quote in Support of Bill on 10/13/2021

What's Next:

[Resolution No. 24: Support Funding and Changes to the Department of Veterans Affairs Grant and Per Diem Program](#)

**Draft Legislation on Homelessness Elderly Pilot:** To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program on grants for care for elderly homeless veterans, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

What's Next:

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

**Draft Legislation on Homelessness Tech Assistance:** To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide technical assistance to recipients of grants for supportive services for very low-income families in permanent housing and comprehensive service programs, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

What's Next:

Resolution: *Pending Draft Resolution*

**Draft Legislation on Homelessness Extend HVRP:** To amend title 38, United States Code, to increase and extend the authorization of appropriations for homeless veterans reintegration programs.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

What's Next:

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

**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.

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

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

What's Next:

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

**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.

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

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

What's Next:

**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.

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

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

**What's Next:**

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

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## **SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO**

**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.

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

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

**What's Next:** A full vote in the U.S. House

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

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# **GLOSSARY OF FREQUENTLY USED TERMS**

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

## RESOURCE PAGE



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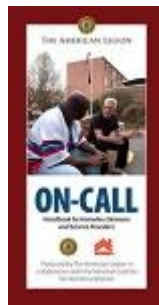
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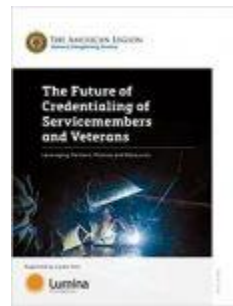
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## Awards Program



The first American Legion Veterans Employment & Education Commission award was established in 1947 and honored employers across the country who had established outstanding records in the employment and retention of veterans, disabled veterans, and older workers.

- Learn how to apply for these Awards at: <https://www.legion.org/careers/awards>
- For more information contact:  
**Edwin Cruz**  
(202) 263-5771  
[ecruz@legion.org](mailto:ecruz@legion.org)

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## Services That Really Help

Career fairs and workshops, guidance on education, homeless services, small business resources and more:



➤ **CAREER/EMPLOYMENT CENTER:**

- <http://legion.monster.com/?scmdlCmscc=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 TOOLS:**

- <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USSBA/bulletins/2eba258>

## MORE STORIES...

### **NJ TRANSIT CONTINUES PARTNERSHIP WITH EDGE4VETS TO CONNECT VETERANS TO JOBS**

“NJ TRANSIT continues to lead a coalition of partners to connect New Jersey veterans, National Guard members, transitioning military service personnel and their spouses to careers in the transportation sector.” [Continue reading the article](#)

### **TINY HOMES OFFER A PATH OUT OF HOMELESSNESS FOR KANSAS CITY VETERANS**

“VCP Village is a community of 49 tiny homes on 89th Street and Troost, offering formerly homeless veterans not just a fully furnished place but also counseling, dental care, and financial literacy services.” [Continue reading the article](#)

### **WHILE THE PENTAGON IS DOING MORE BUSINESS WITH SMALL COMPANIES, THE LIST OF CANDIDATES IS SHRINKING**

“The Defense Department has spent more of its contracting budget on small businesses in recent years, but those dollars are going to a shrinking pool of companies.” [Continue reading the article](#)

### **VETERANS ASK CONGRESS TO REVIVE TROOPS TO TEACHERS PROGRAM AFTER IT WAS ENDED THIS MONTH**

“A number of veterans' organizations sent a letter to Congress Thursday urging them to reverse a recent decision by the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) to cancel a military education program, Troops to Teachers.” [Continue reading the article](#)

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