

The Weekly Report

October 29th, 2021

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VE&E'S LATEST ANNOUNCEMENT

The American Legion testified Oct. 26 in an open hearing before the U.S. Department of Education on negotiated rule-making for higher education, urging the department to ensure the law closing the 90/10 loophole is translated accurately and explicitly into subsequent rules and regulations.

When President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan, the \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief bill, it also created a policy change that has been long-advocated for by The American Legion — closing the 90/10 loophole. This rule mandated for-profit schools obtain at least 10 percent of their revenue from sources other than Title IV education funds, which are the primary source of student aid. GI Bill benefits fall within the 10 percent category, making them valuable to for-profit institutions. Because of this, for-profit institutions have aggressively targeted veterans and servicemembers with deceptive recruiting methods. This left veterans particularly vulnerable to predatory institutions.

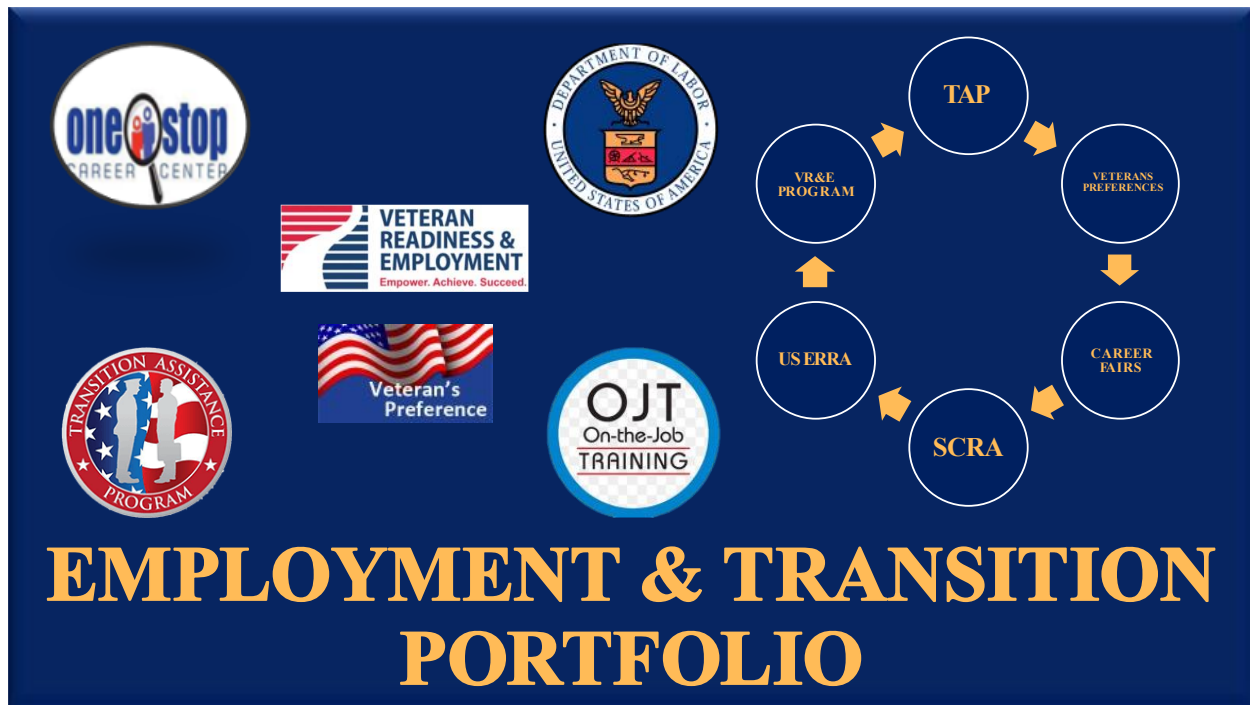
In 2015, The American Legion's National Executive Committee passed [Resolution No. 15: Support Greater GI Bill Outcomes By Closing 90-10 Loophole](#). This resolution reaffirmed the Legion's longstanding advocacy when it comes to securing a veteran's right to education.



David Proferes

"We have worked tirelessly for years to highlight the targeting of servicemembers, veterans and their families by exploitative institutions for their earned educational benefits," said David Proferes, policy coordinator for The American Legion's National Veterans Employment & Education Division.

"The fight for student veterans is not over. The law must be implemented such that veterans and their families are safeguarded," Proferes added.



The Veterans Employment and Education Division (VE&E) *Employment & Transition Portfolio* actively participates in numerous outreach efforts for veterans seeking employment after military service. VE&E staff assist in career fairs throughout the country and works to protect the careers and benefits of Reservists and National Guardsmen during military deployments. VE&E team also lobbies aggressively for **veterans-preference** laws; conducts surveys, studies and recommends solutions on problems relating to **employment, unemployment, underemployment** and **workers' compensation** for all veterans. Additionally, VE&E staff administers several programs, conducts outreach, and testifies before Congress to ensure our servicemembers make seamless transitions from military to civilian life.



Staff Meetings on Employment Topics

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division met, through Microsoft Teams, with Glen Bressalmo, Customer Success Manager of the online virtual job and career fair platform company, Premier Virtual. The purpose of the meeting was to learn how other event hosts that use Premier Virtual incorporate sponsorships. Mr. Bressalmo found that users integrated sponsorship pricing points for piecemeal and bundled offers. Furthermore, he demonstrated numerous parts on the platform, such as event banners, Youtube Video slots, and in-event descriptions that recognize and feature sponsors for attendees and employers to see. When asked what the average pricing event hosts asked from sponsors, Mr. Bressalmo found that \$300-\$500 an event was considered reasonable. Following the meeting, VE&E Staff will prepare a mockup event to demo to



the Media and Communications division, along with a 1-pager highlighting opportunities, limitations, and draft sponsorship pricing options.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division spoke with David Hickey, Chief Executive Officer of Autopersonnel. The purpose of the meeting was to gain insight in the company’s hiring practices and how veteran hiring looks in the manufacturing industry. Autopersonnel recruits veterans and servicemembers to place them in the automotive industry through dealerships. According to Mr. Hickey, there are over 400,000 service technician positions open throughout the United States due to an aging workforce and a lack of training programs for service techs, and demand is expected to grow up to a 10% rate yearly. There is also a high turnover rate (27%) in the industry according to Mr. Hickey. Autopersonnel seeks to rectify the issue by screening possible candidates for dealerships. The company finds and captures talent by conducting personal interviews on military bases and career fairs; and gauges candidate skills aptitudes through Wonderlic tests that Autopersonnel subsidizes. The company also draws from over 40,000 resumes by working with militaryhire.com.



David Hickey attested that Dealerships are willing to up and reskill military servicemembers through apprenticeships that can lead up to working as a master technician as well as pay for their education for available programs and courses. For follow up, Mr. Hickey will provide metrics of servicemembers placed into the dealership market.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division virtually attended a Senate Joint Economic Committee Hearing to examine stronger labor markets for robust growth. The purpose of the hearing was to examine the barriers to labor force participation and to learn how policy makers can aid in addressing such challenges. Chairman Donald S. Beyer Jr. and Ranking Member Mike Lee gave opening remarks:



Chairman Beyer noted that 66 percent of workers who dropped out of the labor force since the COVID-19 pandemic are women and raised concern that without action “to better support women returning to work, we may experience prolonged periods of worker shortages that will hurt our nation’s economy.” The Chairman concluded that while strong labor demand can incentivize workers back into the labor force, existing gaps to help laborer’s must also be addressed.

Ranking Member Lee argued that Government programs and policies such as increased safety net benefits disincentivize work. The Ranking Member concluded that removing licensing, regulations, and federal vaccine mandates, which he labeled as barriers to entry, while strengthening work requirements will remove work disincentives and make labor more attractive.



Chairman Beyer then recognized four witnesses to provide opening statements:



Dr. Betsey Stevenson, Professor of Economics and Public Policy at The Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy began by contesting the conventional wisdom that unemployment benefits keep workers at home, citing studies that “states that ended unemployment insurance early saw no pronounced rebound in employment” and that some industries with workers eligible for unemployment insurance still “made a full return and currently exceed pre-pandemic employment”. Dr Stevenson listed supply chain shocks, challenges juggling work and caregiving, and reallocation in labor markets due to changes in

consumer and worker preferences as alternatively critical reasons for lack of labor force participation. She asserted that challenges to juggling between work and providing care created a negative feedback loop where laborers leave jobs, resulting in diminished employability and less likelihood to reenter the job market compared to individuals capable of meeting family needs while remaining employed. Dr. Stevenson went on to express concern with the United State’s languishing female labor force participation rate, citing that it ranked 23rd out of the 44 countries that make up the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) when it used to rank 6th. She concluded that since 66 percent of caregivers are women, and that their responsibilities prevent them from taking part in the labor force, that there need to be paid leave structures in place to bolster women’s workforce participation. She offered three points about paid leave, listing that it increases worker retention, it has no noticeable negative effect to businesses, and that it has a positive externality to children, whose lifetime wages and employment capabilities increase due to increased time bonding with new parents.



Mr. Skanda Amarnath, Executive Director at Employ America began by explaining the difficulties of measuring labor markets. Using the unemployment rate “understates the true employment gap” since health crisis depressed labor force participation “thereby distorting the current unemployment rate”. Mr. Amarnath admitted that “we don’t really know who is in the labor force and who is out of the labor force with any real precision accuracy. It’s simply easier to see who is employed and who is not employed and benchmark accordingly”. He predicted that the current economy should fully recover by next year, similar to the recovery time of previous recessions, and credited responsive monetary and fiscal policy for having mitigated the

recession’s impact. Examining the current labor economic landscape, Mr. Amarnath concluded that settling for a shallow recovery during uncharacteristically rapid growth will enable businesses “accustomed to slack labor markets” to underinvest, making it difficult for employees to invest fully in the economy.

Mr. Daniel Swenson-Klatt, Owner of Butter Bakery Café and a representative of a national network of small businesses known as Main Street Alliance, attributed “staff, community support, and government support through the SBA” as testaments for having weathered through economic and health crisis disruptions. He concluded that his applicant pool can be delimited if affordable high-quality childcare, access to affordable housing, reliable and affordable transit, and comprehensive paid leave programs were available.





Ms. Rachel Greszler, Research Fellow in Economics in Budget and Entitlements at The Heritage Foundation asserted that government policies have disincentivized work, given that “states that ended unemployment benefits early have experienced much faster recovery” while states that didn’t missed out on gaining “800k more jobs in July and August alone.” Ms. Greszler expressed concern of the considered reconciliation, citing studies that it will reduce employment by 5.3 to 8.7 million people due to eliminated work requirements, and will also impact businesses by “micromanaging workers, limiting workplace flexibility, and exacerbating supply shortages and cost increases”

ECONOMIC NEWS RELEASE

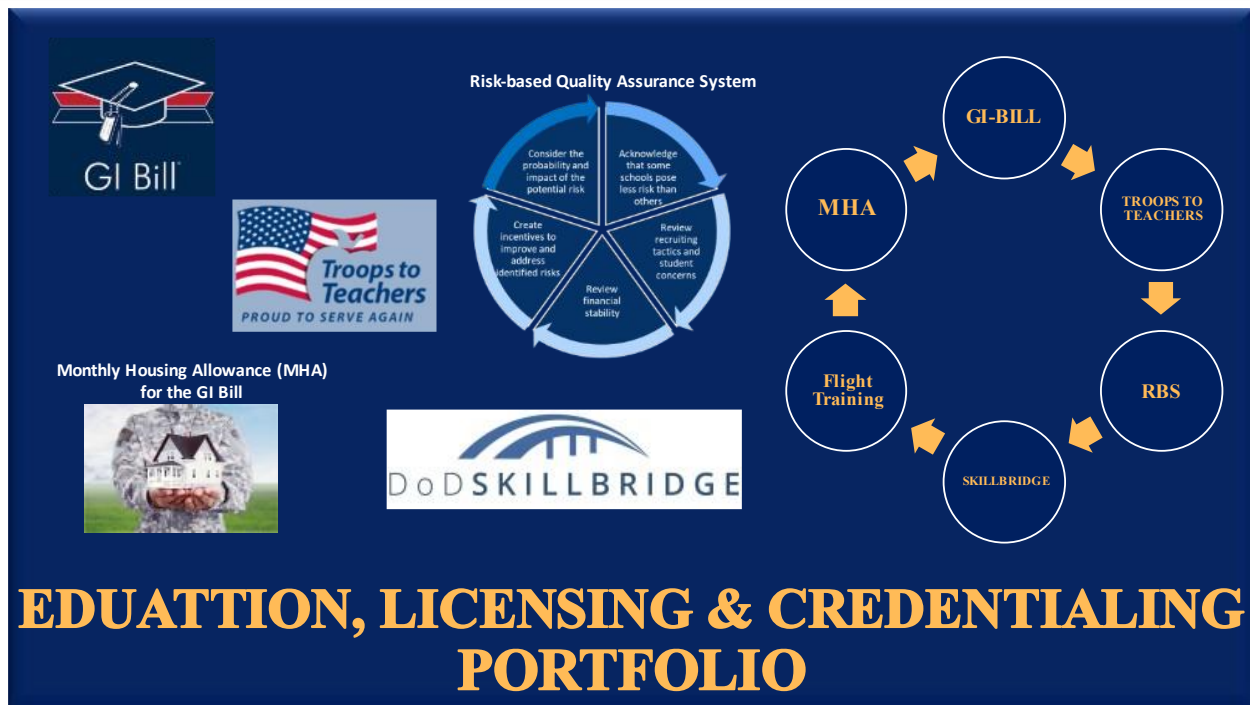
- The national unemployment rate is **5.1 percent** (September 2021)
- Gulf War II veterans' unemployment rate is **3.5 percent** (September 2021)
- Gulf War II women veterans' unemployment rate is **2.1 percent** (September 2021)
- In September 2021, the veteran unemployment rate was **3.9%**. The comparable 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

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
Unemployed	568	304	496	266	72	37
Unemployment rate	6.4	3.6	6.4	3.6	6.5	3.3



The Veterans Employment and Education Division (VE&E) has maintained a strong connection to the GI-Bill since 1944 when Past National Commander Harry Colmery crafted it on stationery at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington. Since then, the GI Bill – considered the most significant social legislation of the 20th century – has educated millions of Americans and gave birth to a half-century of economic prosperity. VE&E staff collaborate in breaking down credentialing barriers that affect veterans and the military community.

The *Education, Licensing & Credentialing Portfolio* ensures that veterans' educational benefits provided by the United States government are sufficient to pay all of the cost of a college education at state-supported colleges, all of the costs of trade school education, and a substantial portion of education provided by privately-owned colleges. VE&E staff provides assistance for veterans and also lobbies Congress and works with the VA to strengthen the benefits.

Staff Meetings on Education Topics

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a meeting with Veterans Affairs Education Service and the Risk-Based-Survey (RBS) team to discuss nationwide implementation of the RBS model; Discussion centered around:

- Expansion of the pilot program
- Fine tuning of forms
- Possibilities of reporting

Some on the VA team remain lukewarm in their support. In fact, one person suggested we must continue to do compliance as a part of risk based surveys. Also, the VE&E team held a meeting with the RBS Team and Education Counsel on the best path forward for national scale up, training of State Approving Agencies (SAAs) and VA resistance to the National Association of State Approving Agencies (NASAA) model.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division had a conversation with National Association of State Approving Agencies (NASAA) leadership to discuss VA's new method of having school officials ask VA a question and their potential negative impact on veterans. VA requires an ID system that many certifying officials, particularly those working at Apprenticeship and On-the-Job-Training (OJTs) will not be comfortable with submitting (SSNs, passports, etc.)

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division National Higher Education Consultant, Joseph Wescott attended the National Association of State Approving Agencies (NASAA) National Training Institute in Phoenix, Arizona to present on the History of the GI Bill (including the critical role played by the American Legion) and on the new Risk Based Survey model developed by NASAA in conjunction with The American Legion and others.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division presented to the National Association of State Approving Agencies (NASAA) National Training Institute (NTI) and the House Veterans Affairs Committee Legislative staffers as well as a staffer from the VA Oversight Committee (some 20 people in attendance from the Hill); Discussed at length the NASAA Risk Based Survey Model and method. Congressional staffer support was enthusiastic, and they see this a definite way to help ensure quality programming that results in good paying jobs. The focus was on this FY (2021-22) will be a year of transition, so we mainly shared the background of the model, how it works and then the forms which could be used even in other areas such as reapproval and tech assist visits. SAA personnel were enthusiastic about this new oversight model and the VA less so. We will continue to seek the support of Congress and VSOs to ensure the new model is scaled up nationally and becomes a reality when October 2022 arrives.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended second day of the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education (VACOE) meeting. Presented to the National Training Institute (NTI) on the history of the GI Bill, particularly noting the role played by The American Legion. We were briefed on the status of the digital GI Bill (still being developed and rolled out) and then each subcommittee presented their findings. Joseph Wescott chaired the Distance Education subcommittee and we shared our research and recommendations. The Distance Education Subcommittee recommended that VA:

- Do a complete review and revision of the regulations to ensure that they reflected latest developments in the distance learning field
- Consider promoting legislation that would more equitably deal with the GI Bill housing allowance so as to not penalize veterans and military affiliated students the prefer that modality
- Instruct the VA to implement on time the new NASAA Risk Based Survey model. All recommendations were supported by the VACOE.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended the 2021 National Association of Veteran Program Administrators (NAVPA) Conference. VE&E engaged in events over two days covering several important topics such as legislation, Risk-Based Survey, veterans' economic opportunity, and the 85-15 rule. NAVPA membership are mostly comprised of School Certifying Officials (SCOs) and veteran administrative counselors who assist veterans on school campuses with understanding and using for

veterans' education benefits. The conference provided an opportunity for VE&E staff to hear the issues facing SCOs and student veterans. The feedback from NAVPA membership and panelists will help inform VE&E staff on future legislative and policy priorities.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a legislative panel in which staff from the House Veterans' Affairs Committee (HVAC) and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee (SVAC) spoke on topics related to veterans' higher education policy.

The legislative panel highlighted persistent issues facing school certifying officials (SCOs) and student veterans. The primary themes discussed were the implementation challenges of the Isakson & Roe Act, VA's lack of communication, and the new interpretation of the 85-15 rule. SCOs have limited resources and many of the new measures are likely to impose additional challenges. According to the law, VA is required to obtain compliance surveys from schools accepting VA educational benefits. However, according to many of the NAVPA members, VA has delegated this duty to 3rd parties in some instances who have no experience or knowledge of higher education. This raises serious concerns about oversight. Lastly, HVAC and SVAC staff emphasized the need for Isakson & Roe fixes and remain optimistic that these fixes will be pushed through Congress. The only barrier is funding, which continues to divide members of Congress.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a briefing by a Supervisory Education Compliance Survey Specialist from and the Department of Veterans' Affairs' (VA) Education Compliance Department.

The VA's Education Compliance Department representative answered questions from NAVPA's members and president. School Certifying Officials raised several significant concerns with the VA such as how to interpret "supported" and "unsupported" students according 85/15 rule, and the measures schools can take to comply with the new interpretation of the 85/15 rule. Of note, the Education Compliance Survey Specialist stated that schools can mitigate or eliminate the possibility of violating the 85/15 rule by choosing to decline endowments and refusing to offer veterans institutional aid. The consequence of these options means schools may have to turn student veterans away from some programs.

85/15 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

- https://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/docs/presentations/85-15_FAQs.pdf
 - https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/85_Percent_Rule_Factsheet.asp?user_id=2733534&first_name=Lillian&last_name=Morrison&email=lmorrison%40wcupa.edu&lang=en&session_id=458543&session_name=85%2F15%20Roundtable
-

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a briefing by Dr. Joseph Wescott to National Association of Veterans' Program Administrators (NAVPA) members on a new and innovative Risk-Based Survey (RBS) model developed by NASAA. An RBS is required by law replace the VA's compliance survey as the State Approving Administrators' (SAA) primary tool for veterans' higher education oversight.

The Risk-Based Survey model takes an evidence-based, comprehensive approach to oversight rather than an accounting approach used currently in the VA's compliance survey. Not only does the RBS save taxpayer dollars, but it also eliminates much of the administrative burdens on School Approving Administrators (SAAs) and School Certifying Officials (SCOs). The NAVPA membership were receptive to the model and hopeful that the VA will adopt it or a comparable model. One of the concerns expressed

by the NAVPA members was VA has been contracting compliance specialists with no experience in higher education that are conducting VA compliance surveys.

The American Legion welcomes shift from VA compliance survey to an RBS 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. The American Legion has worked closely with NASAA, VA, and other stakeholders to ensure the RBS model eventually implemented is effective. The American Legion supports the development and implementation of a risk-based model through [Resolution No. 11: GI Bill Risk Based Survey](#).

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a briefing by a speaker from the George W. Bush Presidential Center on recent research and initiatives regarding student veterans in higher education and the various taskforces at the George W. Bush Presidential Center.

The briefing highlighted key areas for improvement in veterans' higher education. There is a growing gap between the general public and the military connected community, which disadvantages veterans pursuing higher education after leaving the military. Additionally, school campuses are underestimating the value veterans bring to institutions and the student population. The George W. Bush Presidential Center is conducting research to inform policy at the state and institution level on best practices for student veterans on school campuses.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division testified at the Higher Education Rulemaking 2021-2022 on the 90/10 rule. The American Legion has been actively engaged with policymakers and other relevant stakeholder to close the 90/10 loophole for over a decade. VE&E is focused on ensuring that the 90/10 loophole, which was closed earlier this year through legislation, is closed effectively according to the regulations the Department of Education is tasked with drafted. VE&E anticipates participating in the 90/10 rulemaking process over the next few months. Through [Resolution No. 15: Support Greater GI Bill Outcomes By Closing 90-10 Loophole](#), The American Legion encourages federal agency action to ensure better quality and student outcomes for institutions enrolling veterans using their earned education benefits.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with Lisa Lutz, President of Solutions for Information Design (SOLID), to discuss recent events and ongoing initiatives related to veterans' credentialing and certification. Lack of information about the various programs and resources for credentialing continue to be a barrier for servicemembers. the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in Indianapolis, Indiana, on October 6-7, 2021 passed a [Resolution No. 15: Department of Defense Issuance for Military Credentialing Programs](#) to address significant inconsistencies of credentialing programs across military branches. Specifically, the resolution addressed the need for the Department of Defense (DoD) to publish a regulation to set a standard for credentialing programs. The American Legion welcomes the DoD's publishing of [DOD instruction 1322.33](#) that "Establishes policy, assigns responsibilities, and prescribes procedures related to the implementation and management of DoD credentialing programs (CP)."

HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING PORTFOLIO

The Veterans Employment and Education Division (VE&E) *Homelessness & Housing Portfolio* places a priority on the issue of veteran homelessness. With veterans making up approximately 11% of our nation's total adult homeless population, there are plenty of reasons to pay close attention this particular issue. To help our struggling brothers-and-sisters-in-arms, VE&E staff works on a global level, lobbying for legislation affecting veteran homelessness, and acts on a local level, directly assisting veterans who have fallen on tough times and are without a place to live or are on the verge of homelessness.

Staff Meetings on Homelessness Topics



The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a livestreamed oversight hearing by the House of Representatives, Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Subcommittee on Economic

Opportunity. The hearing was titled “A Whole of Government Approach in Support of Servicewomen” and its purpose was to discuss supporting servicewomen in their transition from military to civilian life and the challenges they face during the transition process. Rep. Mike Levin [D-CA-49], Chair of the House Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity opened the hearing and welcomed all present. He shared a brief history of the military Transition Assistance Program (TAP) which was established to ease veterans transition to civilian life. Additionally, he stated that women represent the fastest growing veteran population and that we must evolve in meeting their unique needs.

The first panel, comprised of individuals representing their respective federal agencies consisted of William Mansell, Director of the Defense Service Center, Department of Defense (DOD); Margarita Devlin, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Veterans Employment and Training Services (VETS), Department of Labor (DOL); and Lourdes Tiglao, Director of the Center for Women Veterans, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), who was accompanied by Dr. Lawrencia Pierce, Deputy Director of Outreach, Transition, and Economic Development (OTED), Department of VA.



Testimony of Mr. William Mansell:

Mr. Mansell stated that the welfare of women servicemember is a specific concern as this population has historically had greater unemployment and increased self-care issues post-transition. Additionally, he discussed VA Women’s Health Transition Training, a program designed specifically to support women servicemembers as they transition out of the military. This program was the result of a collaboration between the DOD and VA. It was initiated by the VA and U.S. Air Force in 2018.

VA Women’s Health Transition Training (WHTT)

This online and self-paced course may be taken at any time and provides important information for transitioning women service members and women veterans on health care services available from the VA after separation from the military. After completion, expected outcomes include a better understanding of:¹

- How VA health care is designed to serve women servicemembers and veterans
- Available women’s health care services (e.g. maternity care, cancer screenings, whole health, and mental health care services)
- The process and eligibility requirements for enrollment—you don’t have to be disabled to receive health care at VA
- How to connect with other women Veterans through women-specific networks, resources, and programs post-service
- How to find your local VA facility and resources for additional support

Testimony of Margarita Devlin:

“The Department of Labor is the Federal authority on employment, and VETS is the DOL agency responsible for addressing veteran employment. VETS partners with DOL’s Employment and Training

¹ U.S. Department of Veterans’ Affairs. VA Benefits and Health Care, Center for Women Veterans (CWV). “VA Women’s Health Transition Training.” Accessed from <https://www.va.gov/womenvet/whtt/index.asp> on October 27, 2021.



Administration (ETA) to serve veterans through the public workforce system—a system that supports economic growth by providing workers and employers important resources to maximize employment opportunities.”

“The workforce system offers assistance to veterans through a nationwide network of nearly 2,400 one-stop job centers (referred to as American Job Centers, or AJCs) that provide services funded and coordinated by DOL, state and local governments, and other Federal partners. Last year, more than 3.2 million Americans, including 203,269 veterans (of which 31,425 were women) received

staff-assisted employment assistance at an AJC.”

“VETS is also implementing another pilot initiative, the Off-Base Transition Training (OBTT) program. Implemented in accordance with section 4303 of the “Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020” (Public Law 116-315), OBTT is an extension of TAP for veterans and their spouses, at locations other than active installations for a period of five years, at a minimum of 50 locations, and in at least 20 states with high rates of veteran unemployment. In addition to the population that is eligible to participate in the OBTT under the law, the Department will also expand eligibility to members of the National Guard and Reserves and their spouses. VETS will use the most current veteran unemployment data to ensure the OBTT is piloted in the states with the highest unemployment rates among veterans.”²



Testimony of Lourdes Tiglao:

“Women are the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. Veteran population, and the number of women Veteran users increased by 51.8% since 2008.”

“In accordance with the “Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020” (P.L. 116-315), the WHTT program was set to continue only through January 2022. However, since WHTT continues to positively impact Service women by providing gender-specific explanations of benefits and services provided by the VA health care system; the

VA/DoD Joint Executive Committee (JEC) voted to make WHTT a permanent voluntary component of TAP in fiscal year 2019.”

“Participant responses demonstrate that WHTT is providing a return on investment with nearly 200 Active-Duty Service women participants who completed WHTT between February and July 2021. As a result, 54% of WHTT participants enrolled in VA health care after separation from service.”³

² Testimony of Margarita Devlin, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Veterans’ Employment and Training Service, U.S. Department of Labor before the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, United States House of Representatives. “*A Whole of Government Approach in Support of Servicewomen*” Accessed from <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/VR/VR10/20211026/114162/HHRG-117-VR10-Wstate-DevlinM-20211026-U1.pdf> on October 27, 2021

³ Testimony of Ms. Lourdes Tiglao, Director, Center for Women Veterans, Department of Veterans Affairs before the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, United States House of Representatives. “*A Whole of Government Approach in Support of Servicewomen*” Accessed from <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/VR/VR10/20211026/114162/HHRG-117-VR10-Wstate-TiglaoL-20211026-U1.pdf> on October 27,2021.

Questions to the Panel:

[Question:] Chairman Levin began by stating its absolutely critical that the DOD and service leadership at every level are invested in the success of transitioning service members. He asked Mr. Mansell “*How does DOD encourage commanding officers to prioritize effective transition for service members?*”

[Answer:] *Mr. Mansell responded by stating the DOD encourages commanders through communication, performance management, and through the interagency process. Commanders are the authority to determine if the transitioning veteran has met all career readiness standards or if they need additional assistance.*

[Question:] Chairman Levin asked Ms. Devlin a question regarding the OBTT program. He asked, “*May you provide a detailed timeline for implementation?*”

[Answer:] *Ms. Devlin stated that the curriculum is expected to be developed by January 2022. Additionally, she stated the program pilot will be conducted in five states, which VETS is currently working with to identify classroom locations. Those states consist of California, Texas, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts. She expressed that the pilot is expected to be implemented during the first quarter of 2022.*

[Question:] Rep. Julia Brownley [D-CA-26], Chairwoman of the House Veterans’ Affairs Subcommittee on Health asked Ms. Devlin about homeless women veterans with children and referred to the “Homeless Veterans With Children Reintegration Act”, a bill Rep. Brownley is sponsoring. She asked Ms. Devlin to talk about the connection between the transition to civilian life and homelessness.

[Answer:] *Ms. Devlin stated that the Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program (HVRP) has services specifically for women. Additionally, she stated that VETS supports services that will help servicewomen successfully navigate the transition assistance program.*

The second panel consisted of representatives from Veterans Service Organizations and non-profit organizations. The group consisted of Jodie M. Grenier, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Foundation for Women Veterans; Phyllis Abbott, Founder and Executive Director of Lady Veterans Connect; Lory Manning, Director of Government Relations for Service Women’s Action Network; and Ginger Miller, President and CEO of Women Veterans Interactive.



Testimony of Jodie M. Grenier:

“This testimony will discuss the four main areas that impact successful transition for women: access to gender-specific healthcare and programs, lacking financial planning, limited job readiness, and the Transition Assistance Program’s (TAP) inability to effectively collaborate with organizations that meet needs and fill gaps for veterans. The current transition readiness and assistance programs fail to address various issues that impact all servicemembers’ transition; however, we will cover those that primarily impact women service members.”

“Overwhelmingly, women service members and women veterans report that despite various improvements, there still is little information shared on how to apply for VA Healthcare & Disability Benefits during TAP and that they either receive little or no information whatsoever on the women specific health care benefits at the VA.”

“Women veterans in all age cohorts earn significantly less than male veterans, a gap that generally increases with age. Women veterans suffer from higher unemployment rates than their male counterparts, especially post 9/11 women. A military-transition.org survey reported 52% of women veterans face three months of unemployment after service and 26% face one year or more unemployment after service.”⁴



Testimony of Phyllis Abbott:

“Homelessness - VA research has found “women veterans are more than twice as likely to become homeless as women who did not serve in the military. Additionally, 1-2% of women veterans and 13-15% of women veterans living in poverty will experience homelessness over the course of a year” (Vantage Point, 2020). Women veterans are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population according to the Department of Veterans Affairs (Military.com, 2018). Once women veterans become homeless, they are difficult to reach as they blend into the homeless population and do not identify as veterans. They often are not considered as being

homeless as they become “couch surfers” staying with friends, family members, or temporary relationships with men. Again, I must stress here the importance of changing the language to asking, “are you a veteran?” to ensure these women are identified as veterans and provide the services they have earned as veterans. Homeless veterans are better equipped at disappearing from the public eye based on their experience in the military, making it much more difficult to reach them and connecting them to housing and programs that restore them to being the proud women they were while serving in the military.”⁵

American Legion [Resolution No. 319: Expanding Veterans Employment and Homeless Services within the Department of Veterans Affairs](#). The VA homeless veterans’ programs have proved to be successful in the rehabilitation of veterans and assisting them to become more productive citizens.

American Legion [Resolution No. 100: Accountability of the Department of Defense’s Transition Assistance Program \(TAP\)](#). The mandatory pre-separation counseling process represents the most holistic, personal, and extended component of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP). Additionally, Career Readiness Standard (CRS) are tangible measures of a servicemember’s preparedness for a civilian career. The American Legion supports legislation that would mandate the Department of Defense to allow transitioning servicemembers to attend TAP at different intervals of their military service to include pre-separation counseling,

American Legion [Resolution No. 17: Women Veterans Homelessness Resource Provisions and Protections](#). As women veterans make up 10% of the veteran population and their numbers have doubled in the past decade, and trauma before, during, or after military service is a common factor among women veteran experiencing homelessness, The American Legion urges the VA to provide additional resource for women veterans and their families to prevent and end homelessness.

⁴ Statement Of Jodie M. Grenier, Chief Executive Officer Foundation For Women Warriors before the Committee On Veterans’ Affairs, Subcommittee On Economic Opportunity, United States House Of Representatives. (October 26, 2021). “*A Whole of Government Approach in Support of Servicewomen*” Accessed from <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/VR/VR10/20211026/114162/HHRG-117-VR10-Wstate-GrenierJ-20211026-U1.pdf> on October 27, 2021.

⁵ Statement of Phyllis Abbott, Executive Director and Founder Lady Veterans Connect before the Committee on Veterans Affairs, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, U. S. House of Representatives. (October 26, 2021). “*A Whole of Government Approach in Support of Servicewomen*” Accessed from <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/VR/VR10/20211026/114162/HHRG-117-VR10-Wstate-AbbottP-20211026-U1.pdf> on October 27, 2021.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division viewed a livestreamed oversight hearing conducted by the U.S. Senate, Committee on Veterans' Affairs titled "**Success After Service: Improving Veterans' Employment, Education, and Home Loan Opportunities.**" Rep. Jerry Moran [R-KS], ranking member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs convened the hearing and provided opening remarks. He began by thanking all the witnesses for their presence and stated that we are nearing Veteran's Day and this hearing is an opportunity to discuss the current state of affairs and economic well-being of veterans and their families, whether through education, training, or employment opportunities as well as utilizing the VA home loan program to purchase a home.

He continued by stating that the last year and a half have been a challenge for student veterans, institutions of higher learning, and the Department of Veterans' Affairs. He thanked the chairman and members of the committee to ensure student veterans had protections in place during the pandemic.

The first panel consisted of Margarita Devlin, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Operations and Management, Veterans Employment and Training Service, Department of Labor and Ronald Burke, Jr., Deputy Under Secretary for Policy and Oversight, Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. Burke was accompanied by Ricardo Da Silva, Program Integration Officer, Education Service.



Testimony of Margarita Devlin:

"I believe it is critical that we provide the highest quality services to enable veterans, service members and military spouses to achieve their highest potential. On a personal note, my oldest son, who is currently an active-duty Marine, is scheduled to separate next year. So, this is also close to home for me.

VETS is taking a proactive approach by reaching out to underserved veteran communities, such as LGBTQ veterans, veterans of color, and female veterans, who have not traditionally interacted with DOL and other segments of the federal government at the same rate as other veteran communities. By engaging with new partners, we will increase awareness of VETS programs and work towards removing barriers to equitable access.

VETS has maintained ongoing collaboration during the pandemic with VA and the Department of Defense (DOD) on how best to continue and improve the Transition Assistance Program (TAP). The Department also collaborated with VA on initiatives such as Veteran Readiness and Employment apprenticeships, the Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program, and veteran employer referrals.

Despite the pandemic challenges, I am pleased to inform you that 6,487 virtual instructor-led and 9,088 in person TAP workshops that VETS conducted, between March 1, 2020 and September 30, 2021, provided service to more than 242,000 transitioning service members and spouses. To be able to improve, track, and publicly report TAP outcomes, the Administration continues to deploy several pilot initiatives that aim to determine whether they improve employment outcomes, including employment and earnings rates after program exit, for transitioning service members and their spouses.

Recognizing the evidence base on apprenticeships, on April 1, 2020, VETS launched an Apprenticeship Pilot at 8 military installations to provide transitioning service members, and their spouses, opportunities to be hired into apprenticeship positions, including Registered Apprenticeships, prior to separation, in industries and locations that match their interests. During the pilot that concluded on March 31, 2021, APCs received a total of 371 apprenticeship applications from 275 applicants. In total, 79 transitioning service members and 3 military spouses were placed into apprenticeships."⁶

⁶ Testimony Of Margarita Devlin, Deputy Assistant Secretary Veterans' Employment And Training Service (VETS), U.S. Department Of Labor (DOL) before the Committee On Veteran Affairs, United States Senate. (October 27,



Testimony of Ronald Burke, Jr.:

“VA is committed to assisting our 200,000 Service members transition to civilian life. Whether education, employment, or purchasing a home, we are working to improve access and outcomes for Veterans. Before I delve into how we are delivering for our Veterans, I want to touch on an evolving crisis.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed global and US supply chain weaknesses and we expect the manufacturing and distribution disruptions to extend into Fiscal Year (FY) 2023. As the virus spread, overall consumer demand decreased and industrial activity, in turn, decreased due to the lower consumer demand and effects of COVID-19. With the increasing level of vaccination globally and the end of lockdowns in many nations, consumer demand increased dramatically, while supply chains continue to face big challenges, including worker shortages and limitations in access to raw materials and key components. VA is actively addressing these challenges, implementing near-term methods to ensure internal VA supply chain resiliency, including increased demand signal monitoring, identification of alternatives for preferred products, and treating medical products as enterprise assets.

Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC)

VA is experiencing high demand for the VET TEC 5-year pilot program that provides tuition and housing assistance to help Veterans advance in an IT career. Through VET TEC training programs, Veterans acquire high-tech skills to assist them in moving quickly into in-demand jobs in the following five areas: information science, computer programming, data processing, media applications and computer science. Since launching the VET TEC program on April 1, 2019, VA has certified entitlement for 32,184 eligible Veterans; 757 Veterans are currently enrolled; and 1,437 Veterans have secured employment out of the 2,603 who have graduated. On average, students are earning approximately a \$60,000 annual salary.

Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program (VRRAP)



On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed Public Law 117-2 (the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021) into law. Section 8006 of this law requires VA to carry out VRRAP, which provides up to 12 months of retraining assistance via covered programs of education to not more than 17,250 eligible Veterans who are unemployed due to a covered public health emergency. As of October 1, 2021, there are 2,111 program participants. VA received 10,440 applications for VRRAP benefits, and 6,938 Veterans received a Certificate of Eligibility. Currently, 128 Veterans have graduated

from programs using VRRAP benefits and 804 training providers have been approved for VRRAP. To date, VA has obligated \$61.4 million of the \$386 million in total program funding.

The mission of the loan guaranty program is to maximize opportunities for veterans and servicemembers to obtain, retain and adapt homes. The VA has been steadfast in its commitment of home retention during the COVID-19 pandemic by implementing new programs to assist veterans with VA guaranteed loans who requested forbearance minimized foreclosures, reduced stress on the surfacing ecosystem, and help ensure they could afford future mortgage payments.”⁷

2021) Accessed from

<https://www.veterans.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/10.27.21%20Devlin%20DOL%20Testimony.pdf> on October 28, 2021

⁷ Statement Of Ronald S. Burke, Jr., Deputy Under Secretary, Office Of Policy & Oversight Veterans Benefits Administration before the Senate Committee On Veterans’ Affairs. (October 27, 2021). Accessed from <https://www.veterans.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/10.27.21%20Burke%20VA%20Testimony.pdf> on October 28, 2021.

Rep. Jon Tester [D-MT], Chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee joined the meeting and thanked Rep. Moran for covering for him. He stated that the committee has done a lot of work over the past few years to improve education, employment, and home loan programs for veterans; however, wants to further explore opportunities to remove barriers to access.



Questions to Panel:



[Question:] Rep. Mazie Hirono [D-HI-2] asked a question regarding the hyper-competitive housing market, particularly Hawaii. She began by stating that the average cost of a home in Hawaii is \$1 million. This almost makes it impossible for families, to include veteran families to purchase a home in high-cost areas. What are some steps that the VA is taking to enable our veterans to purchase a home?

[Answer:] Mr. Burke stated that the housing market has been extremely challenging. The loan guaranty division has been doing extension outreach and communications. They are working with organizations within the industry to ensure they understand the benefit of using VA home loans. Additionally, we are increasing our oversight capabilities to search out those that are engaged in fraudulent activities and increasing communication with the National Association of Realtors. We are trying to ensure that they know the value of the VA home loan process. Outreach is being conducted to veterans as well as businesses and other organizations within the industry.

[Question:] Rep. Hirono asked “How does the loan guaranty program account for high-cost housing areas where the loan guaranty portion is not enough to help veterans purchase a home?”

[Answer:] Mr. Burke responded by stating that the VA does accomplish appraisals for all home purchases. They are designed to ensure that the asked for price is proper. Additionally, we are continually monitoring the cost-of-living for each state.



[Question:] Rep. Tommy Tuberville [R-AL] posed a question to Ms. Devlin regarding the gap in the nation’s cybersecurity workforce. He stated that many veterans coming out of the service are likely trained in cybersecurity and that those individuals could easily close that gap. He asked, “How can the overall transition assistance process be better leveraged to provide a seamless pipeline to get more veterans into cybersecurity?”

[Answer:] Ms. Devlin responded by discussing the Employment Navigator and Partnership Pilot program and state that this program is enabling VETS to provided one-on-one technical and specialized assistance to work with service members to examine their unique skills, capabilities, and interests to pair them up with partners within industries such as cybersecurity.

The second panel was comprised of representatives from Veteran Service Organizations and school officials. The panelists were Joe Schumacher, Director of Veteran Services, Montana State University; Arthur DeGroat, EdD, Executive Director of Military & Veterans Affairs, Kansas State University; Patrick Murray, Legislative Director, Veterans of Foreign Wars; and Justin Monk, Policy Associate, Student Veterans of America.



Testimony of Joe Schumacher:

“As we look back at the spring semester of 2020, we faced challenges in higher education not seen in many generations: a global pandemic. As VA school certifying officials, we knew that there would be immediate and devastating impacts to the administration of VA educational benefits by switching from an in-person modality to all online. The housing stipend, that is the lifeline for many of my families, is based on zip code, rate of pursuit, and modality. In

Bozeman, Montana, our students would be receiving half of what they normally would receive based on the policy at that time. Communication of the issue was swift and accurate, legislation was drafted and signed into law, and policy was shared out in an incredibly timely manner that staved off this enormous problem. Not a single student at MSU was negatively impacted by that transition, and I want to thank all of you who were involved in that speedy intervention. You literally saved student veterans that semester. I look to this incident as a shining example of the work that can be accomplished when we communicate, when we share information, and when we listen without being defensive, knowing that we all want what is best for our veterans at the end of the day.”⁸

Testimony of Dr. Arthur DeGroat, Lieutenant Colonel (Retired):

“Today, there does not appear to be a coherent, evidence-based framework or national strategy driving the institutional practices of veterans’ transition assistance. Adaptations of decades old military separation policy and practices have been expanded, with some useful innovations that are helpful to guiding veterans into this life-altering event of post-military transition. However, performance data and anecdotal trends suggest that much of contemporary transition assistance practices are lacking.



I believe that we need a national strategy for veteran transition assistance based upon sound human and social science principle; that also incorporates the holistic nature of the military life cycle from pre- to post-service. Without such change, I do not see how we can yield better outcomes for our veterans despite current efforts to do so.

There is also evidence that the result of unsuccessful veterans’ transition is negatively affecting the recruitment of the next generation of veterans who witness the struggle of veterans’ after their service. With nearly 80% of our current service members being from military families—this generational source of talent is eroding.”⁹

⁸ Statement Of Joseph Schumacher, Director And School Certifying Official Office Of Veteran Services, Travis W. Atkins Veteran Support Center, Montana State University before the Senate Committee On Veterans’ Affairs. (October 27, 2021). Accessed from

<https://www.veterans.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/10.27.21%20Schumacher%20MSU%20Testimony.pdf> on October 29, 2021.

⁹ Statement Of Dr. Arthur Degroat, Ed.D, Lieutenant Colonel (Retired), U.S. Army Executive Director Of Military & Veterans’ Affairs, Kansas State University & Member Kansas Governor’s Military Council before the United States Senate Committee On Veterans’ Affairs with respect to “Success After Service: Improving Veterans’ Employment, Education and Home Loan Opportunities.” (October 27, 2021). Accessed on

<https://www.veterans.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/10.27.21%20DeGroat%20KSU%20Testimony.pdf> on October 29, 2021.



Testimony of Patrick Murray:

“The Digital GI Bill upgrade will accommodate many requests Congress and Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) have been making for years. After the IT overhaul, the Department of Veterans Affairs Education Services (VAES) will have a cleaner platform to replace VA-ONCE for School Certifying Officials, State Approving Agencies, and VA officials, so they can all have the ability to view one screen when interacting with each other instead of different individual platforms.

VA’s Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) program has successfully helped many service-connected veterans pursue employment and education opportunities. However, the VFW remains concerned about the high caseloads VR&E counselors maintain as it limits the amount of time, they can spend with veteran clients assessing their current status, needs, goals, and what constitutes meaningful employment for each veteran. Congress should study changing the current program eligibility standards to determine if doing so would streamline the process by expanding eligibility to all veterans who have been awarded service-connected disability ratings, regardless of the degree of disability.

Finally, the VFW supports establishing within VA the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration. VA is comprised of three administrations—the National Cemetery Administration (NCA), the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), and the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). VBA is in charge of not only compensation and pension, but also the GI Bill, vocational rehabilitation, housing and business loans, and the broadly defined transition assistance program, which is shared with the Departments of Labor, Defense, and Homeland Security.”¹⁰

American Legion **[Resolution No. 70: Improve Transition Assistance Program](#)**. As the goal of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) is to ease the adjustment of separating servicemembers during the difficult transition from active-duty into civilian life by offering job search assistance, medical/health services, the advising of available benefits, and other related counseling, The American Legion require that the Department of Labor thoroughly review the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) for maximum effectiveness in helping servicemembers transition to civilian life and find gainful employment, while encouraging cooperation and inclusion of nationally accredited service organizations in their program.

American Legion **[Resolution No. 329: Support Home Loan Guaranty Program](#)**. Whereas the two purposes of the original program were to help returning World War II veterans in their readjustment to civilian life and to stimulate the economy by assisting those veterans in obtaining mortgages financing from the private sector and to date the VA has guaranteed over 20 million loans to eligible veterans and has for the most part, maintained a lower default rate than private sector mortgages, The American Legion supports any administrative and/or legislative efforts that will improve and strengthen the Loan Guaranty Service's ability to serve America's veterans.

American Legion **[Resolution No. 10: Support for Employment Navigator and Partnership Pilot](#)**. The U.S. Dept of Labor (DOL), Veterans’ Employment and Training Service (VETS) has partnered with high caliber employment and training entities from the public and private sectors to conduct a pilot to better assist transitioning servicemembers and their spouses. Additionally, servicemembers and their spouses may connect with an Employment Navigator at one of the pilot locations and receive assistance securing

¹⁰ Statement Of Patrick Murray, Director National Legislative Service Veterans Of Foreign Wars Of The United States, before the United States Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs with respect to “Success After Service: Improving Veterans’ Employment, Education, And Home Loan Opportunities.” (October 27, 2021). Accessed from <https://www.veterans.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/10.27.21%20Murray%20VFW%20Testimony.pdf> on October 29, 2021.

meaningful and lasting post-separation careers. Therefore, The American Legion urges the U.S. Department of Labor, Veteran's Employment and Training Service continue with the Employment Navigator and Partnership Pilot to evaluate its effectiveness.

American Legion [Resolution No. 349: Support Legislation to Improve the Post-9/11 GI Bill](#). As the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, the original GI Bill, was one of the most successful pieces of legislation and spurred over 50 years of economic prosperity, The American Legion recommends that VA sustain full tuition and fees reimbursement for veterans attending public undergraduate colleges, while setting a national standard for private and graduate schools.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a lunch meeting with Mr. David Horne and Mr. Robert Zimmer, both of whom have vast experience in the mortgage industry to include the VA Home Loan Guaranty program. Additionally, Mr. Zimmer specializes in financial services and public affairs consulting, including banking and real estate issues, mortgage finance, insurance, veterans' lending, and early-stage finance issues. Also present was Mr. John Kamin, Legislative Associate, Legislative Division of The American Legion.

During the meeting we discussed their experience working with the VA Home Loan Guaranty program. We also discussed the housing first model, which the VA has implemented through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)-VA Supportive Housing (VASH) program. This model prioritizes housing and then assists the Veteran with access to healthcare and other supports that promote stable housing and improved quality of life. Additionally, we discussed a draft bill regarding the VA Home Loan Guaranty program that The American Legion reviewed several weeks prior.

American Legion [Resolution No. 329: Support Home Loan Guaranty Program](#). The Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944 (P.L. 346 – 78th Congress) established, among other things, a home loan guaranty program that was to be administered by the Veterans Administration, which later became the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The American Legion reaffirms its strong support for the Department of Veterans Affairs Loan Guaranty Service and its programs.



The Veterans Employment and Education Division (VE&E) *Small Business Development Portfolio* recognizes the benefits of veteran entrepreneurship for veterans and transitioning servicemembers seeking to start their own businesses. The American Legion also understands that giving veterans the resources they need to start businesses will hasten the nation's economic recovery.

Compared to their civilian counterparts, veterans are more successful in starting and growing small businesses. Through entrepreneurship, veterans have a unique opportunity to establish themselves as job-creators and business leaders in their community. Small business is the fuel of the US economic engine, generating 70 percent of the new jobs added to the economy annually. Veteran entrepreneurship is unfortunately at a 40-year low, now is the time to support veteran small businesses to stimulate the economy and ensure America remains a global economic powerhouse.

Staff Meetings on Small Business Topics

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with representatives from Senator Tim Scott's Office for a follow-up meeting to discuss the Legion's veteran small business and government contracting priorities moving forward. Relevant topics discussed included:

- The Legion's support for cybersecurity protections for veteran-owned small businesses, as outlined in [Resolution No. 12: Cybersecurity Protections for Veteran-Owned Small Businesses](#). Given that veterans are more likely than civilians to be self-employed entrepreneurs, cyber-attacks on small businesses pose critical risks to the livelihoods of many veterans. The Legion will be working with Senator Scott, along with other legislative offices, to pass legislation that will fund programs and services that combat cybersecurity risks to small businesses.
- Ensuring the enforcement of Veterans First contracting program at the Department of Veteran's Affairs and its expansion to the Department of Defense, as articulated in [Resolution No. 13: Mandatory Use of the Veterans First Contracting Program by the Department of Defense](#). The Department of Veterans Affairs is currently attempting to transition away from its current VETs First procurement model to the Department of Defense's Defense Logistic Agency's contracting vehicle. This potentially risks depriving veteran-owned small businesses of millions of dollars' worth of federal contracts and risks many veteran job losses. The American Legion requests the mandated adoption of the VETs First procurement model by the Department of Defense in the 2023 NDAA to not only ensure that the VA remains compliant with its current VETs First mandate, but to expand the VETs First program to other government agencies. The Legion will continue to work with many legislative offices to introduce and pass legislation to this effect.
- Legion staff also advocated for the senator's endorsement and introduction of a Senate version of the Veterans Entrepreneurship Act of 2021, a bill which would provide the opportunity for veterans to use their GI Bill Funds for entrepreneurial pursuits. This bill is modeled after [Resolution No. 150: Expanding Post-9/11 GI Bill for Entrepreneurship](#)

The American Legion will continue to work with Senator Scott and other lawmakers to develop policy in-line with the Legion's legislative priorities on small business and government contracting.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a policy luncheon on Infrastructure and Socioeconomic Indicators (SEI) hosted by Regional Economic Models, Inc. (REMI). The luncheon included a two-part discussion that explored the socioeconomic and fiscal impacts of proposed federal infrastructure policy and their influence on labor markets, the environment, and regional economic growth.



Riley Durkin
Associate at REMI

REMI Associate Riley Durkin began the event by providing an analysis of the economic impacts of current infrastructure proposals. Ms. Durkin described the main components of the Build Back Better Agenda, including the current bipartisan infrastructure framework and the reconciliation, before breaking down the INVEST in America Act. Findings indicate that the Midwestern and Southern Regions of the country along with manufacturing industries will benefit most from the INVEST Act.

REMI staff Peter Evangelakis, Ph.D. and Haozheyi Guan then presented a detailed assessment of the economic and environmental effects of transit investments for the Washington DC Metro Area utilizing the REMI input-output model for three specific investments: (1) Bus electrification, (2) DC Purple Line, and (3) Bicycle Infrastructure.



Haozheyi Guan
REMI – Economic Analyst

General findings indicate that each project would provide job opportunities for non-college educated workers and lead to emissions reductions. The myriad findings of each study provide useful information to policymakers when determining the benefits and drawbacks of each infrastructure project.



Peter Evangelakis
Vice President of
Economics at REMI



LEGISLATION TRACKING

EMPLOYMENT & TRANSITION PORTFOLIO

H.R.2196 - Justice for Servicemembers Act

To amend title 9 of the United States Code to prohibit predispute arbitration agreements that force arbitration of certain disputes arising from claims of servicemembers and veterans.

Status: 10/19/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Antitrust, Commercial, and Administrative Law.

[Resolution No. 85: Support Employment and Reemployment Rights of National Guard and Reservists Returning from Deployment](#)

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](#)

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 Provided Quote in Support of Bill on 10/13/2021

What's Next: *Pending Introduction*

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

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: 07/28/2021 Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Ordered to be reported without amendment favorably

What's Next: *Pending Action by Senate*

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

H.R. 5624 - 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

Status: 10/19/2021 Referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

What's Next: *Pending Action By Committee*

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

H.R. 5529: Veterans Justice Outreach Improvement Act: To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make certain improvements to the Veterans Justice Outreach Program, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: Referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on 10/08/2021

What's Next: *Pending Action by House*

[Resolution No. 145: Veterans Treatment Courts](#)

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO

H.R.4433 - Veterans Entrepreneurship Act of 2021- This bill would amend the Small Business Act to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to carry out a pilot program on issuing grants to eligible veterans to start or acquire qualifying businesses, and for other purposes. This bill would provide the opportunity for veterans to utilize their GI Bill benefits to start and finance their small businesses.

Support: 08/03/2021 – Supported by the National Commander in a Letter of Support

Status: 07/16/2021 Referred to the House Committee on Small Business

What's Next: Committee Vote

Resolution No. 150: [Expanding Post-9/11 GI Bill for Entrepreneurship](#)

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

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