

The Hiring Heroes Act of 2011

A bill to improve job training and placement services to ensure veterans who have served and sacrificed for our nation have jobs when they come home. Bipartisan legislation that for the first time takes a comprehensive approach to addressing the skyrocketing unemployment rates for our veterans.

THE PROBLEM: A GENERATION OF UNEMPLOYED YOUNG VETERANS

Veterans have the skills, determination, discipline and talent to succeed in the twenty-first century economy. But too often they face unique challenges that translate into trouble finding a job or starting a business.

- Department of Labor data estimates that the unemployment rate for veterans age 20-24 has been as high as 27 percent.
- With the President's announcement that 33,000 U.S. troops will be pulled out of Afghanistan by the end of 2012, added to those already returning from Iraq, the problem of veteran unemployment will only grow larger.
- Returning veterans face certification barriers-- medics who return home from treating battlefield wounds can't get certifications to be an EMT or to drive an ambulance and truck drivers are unable to get CDL licenses.

THE CONSEQUENCES: JOBS ARE THE BUILDING BLOCK OF A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

Helping veterans find employment provides an income to support their families; creates self-esteem and pride; and is critical to avoiding veteran homelessness.

- The Institute of Medicine, citing a study by the National Center for Homeless Veterans, found an inability for veterans to translate military skills into civilian employment as being a primary cause of homelessness. It is also widely acknowledged, including in a recent RAND study, that employment difficulties are a serious risk factor for suicide among veterans.
- The dignity and security that work provides are critical in addressing some of the biggest challenges veterans are facing including skyrocketing suicide statistics, problems at home, substance abuse, and even in rising homelessness among our young veterans.

THE SOLUTION: THE HIRING HEROES ACT OF 2011: PROVIDING THE SKILLS TO SUCCEED

The Hiring Heroes Act of 2011 is a landmark bill that for the first time authorizes programs aimed at improving the transition from servicemember to civilian employee.

- Provides job training for service members leaving our military by ensuring that every transitioning servicemember participates in DoD's Transition Assistance Program (TAP) which provides job skills training including resume writing, interview skills, and job search information. Currently, the TAP program is not mandatory even though we have a 27% unemployment rate among young veterans.
- Provides a fast track to federal employment for veterans by allowing them to start the process of getting a job without having to wait months for their veterans preference. This will help more veterans have a job waiting for them the day they leave the service.
- Will finally move forward with helping service members transfer the skills they learned in the field back to civilian jobs by beginning to cut the red tape around training and certification barriers.

THE IMPACT: CAPITALIZING ON INVESTMENTS WE MAKE IN OUR HEROES

- We have invested billions of dollars in training our young men and women with new skills to protect our nation. Every servicemember receives formal training for a specialty within their service in addition to training in other areas such as leadership and strategic planning. When servicemembers leave, those valuable skills leave with them. Concurrently, many elements of the Government need dependable people with those same skill sets. It benefits the Government and the servicemember to keep them in the Federal system, and to streamline that process.

THE COST: FULLY PAID FOR AND A COST SAVER

- The bill is paid for by allowing the VA to collect a home loan fee from those who utilize the benefit more than once.
- There is also additional cost savings DoD savings from unemployment payments. Military unemployment payments have doubled since 2008. The military paid \$882 million in unemployment benefits last year, up from \$450 million in fiscal 2008. The 2011 figures are trending even higher.