

# LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION

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## HEARING

BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY  
OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS  
SECOND SESSION

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JULY 29, 2010  
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## LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION

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THURSDAY, JULY 29, 2010

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY,  
*Washington, DC.*

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 1:00 p.m., in Room 334, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin [Chairwoman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Herseth Sandlin, Adler, and Bilirakis.

### OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRWOMAN HERSETH SANDLIN

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. The Veterans' Affairs Economic Opportunity Subcommittee hearing on Licensure and Certification will come to order.

There is a pending vote and not much time left. So we are going to make our opening statements, and then we will have to take a break. We want to get through as much as we can, because of some time concerns with other votes this afternoon.

Before I begin my opening statement, I would like to say that the Disabled American Veterans had asked to submit a written statement for the hearing record. I ask for unanimous consent that the statement be entered for the record. Hearing no objection, so entered.

On March 12, 2010, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics published its finding on the status of unemployed military veterans. The report highlights that veterans between the ages 18 to 24 had an unemployment rate of 21.6 percent in 2009. While these numbers are troubling, today we have the opportunity to build upon the progress we have made on the areas of education and employment that seek to address the high unemployment rates among veterans.

This hearing seeks to build upon the feedback we received in previous hearings on licensure, certification and employment matters. During these hearings, we received testimony on the barriers encountered by veterans. Barriers such as: non-transferable Military Occupation Skills (MOS) to the civilian sector; required supplemental training even though one's military career may have surpassed the requirement in some States; inadequate education benefits under title 38; and the need to augment the Transition Assistance Program (TAP).

I am glad to see we are joined by representatives from the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), which is responsible for training our men and women in uniform to meet the demands of their respective military careers. I am also glad to see the U.S. Department of

Veterans Affairs (VA) and U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) who both oversee these unique benefits and programs that may help our Nation's veterans gain meaningful employment after their military service.

While servicemembers and veterans all have unique career goals, it is vitally important that all Federal agencies continue to work hand-in-hand to provide the best licensing and certification assistance available to our men and women who have answered our Nation's call to duty.

I look forward to hearing from all of our panelists today so that we may continue to help our servicemembers and veterans.

I now recognize our distinguished Ranking Member, Mr. Bilirakis, for his opening remarks.

[The prepared statement of Chairwoman Herseth Sandlin appears on p. 30.]

#### **OPENING STATEMENT OF GUS M. BILIRAKIS**

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate it very much. In reading today's testimony, I saw lots of discussion about the Transition Assistance Program and lots off Web sites that translate military skills and occupations into civilian equivalents.

But I saw very little about how we go about getting education and training institutions to adjust their curricula to account for military training and education.

Secretary Jefferson, I congratulate you for directly identifying the core of the issue as the role of State and local governments, and licensing, and certification. Too often our men and women are needlessly required to repeat education or training already gained in military service.

To me that means that States need to be more flexible in recognizing military training and skills. I am disappointed the National Governors' Association declined once again to join us here today. To me the States hold the key to solving this dilemma.

We cannot afford the current economically inefficient system that ignores the millions of dollars spent on top-quality military education and training.

Madam Chair, we need to provide veterans with the best education and training benefits and work with the education and certifying industries to increase the credit given for training as a way to speed licensing and certification. I yield back. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Thank you, Mr. Bilirakis. We will now take a brief recess. And then when we return, we will welcome our panelists testifying before the Subcommittee today.

[Recess.]

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. We thank everyone for their patience during that last series of votes. Again, we will welcome our panelists testifying on the first panel today. Joining us is Mr. Eric Hilleman, Director of National Legislative Service for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW); Mr. Joseph Sharpe, Jr., Director of the National Economic Commission for the American Legion; Dr. Thomas Zampieri, Director of Government Relations for the Blinded Veterans Association (BVA); and Dr. Vincent Patton, Retired Master Chief Petty Officer of the U.S. Coast Guard,

Director of Community Outreach for Military.com/Monster Worldwide.

I would like to remind our panelists that your complete written statements have been made part of the hearing record. Please limit your remarks to the 5 minutes so that we can have sufficient time for follow-up questions once everyone has had an opportunity to testify.

Mr. Hilleman, we will begin with you. You are recognized for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENTS OF ERIC A. HILLEMANN, DIRECTOR, NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE SERVICE, VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES; JOSEPH C. SHARPE, JR., DIRECTOR, NATIONAL ECONOMIC COMMISSION, AMERICAN LEGION; THOMAS ZAMPIERI, PH.D., DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, BLINDED VETERANS ASSOCIATION; AND MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER VINCE PATTON, III, USCG (RET.), ED.D., DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY OUTREACH, MILITARY.COM/MONSTER WORLDWIDE**

**STATEMENT OF ERIC A. HILLEMANN**

Mr. HILLEMANN. Thank you Madam Chairwoman, Members of this Subcommittee. We appreciate the opportunity to testify at today's hearing on licensure and credentialing. On behalf of the 2.1 million men and women of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, we thank you for a voice at this important hearing.

Upon leaving the military, servicemembers typically follow two tracts: an education tract or an employment tract. A transition process that is helpful and friendly is central to having a successful transition from active duty to civilian life. Securing licensure, credentials or education credit in the areas comparable to their military expertise is central to that transition. The VFW has found that previous military training and experience, whether in a technical field or on the battlefield, is not widely recognized by the private sector.

In the area of education credit, the American Council on Education (ACE) seems to be the primary link between the military and the private sector. The Department of Defense contracts with ACE to review military courses of study, MOS's, for transferable credit into institutions of higher learning. ACE examines specific MOS schools for education credit and recommends credits to be placed on transcripts of servicemembers. These recommended educational equivalents are then accepted by individual schools, depending on the school, the nature of the credit, and the veteran's course of study.

Further, ACE produces a guide entitled, "A Transfer Guide; Understanding Your Military Transcript and ACE Credit Recommendations," which aids veterans and their institutions in better understanding how and what translates into college credit.

The number of schools accepting ACE credit varies State by State. In South Dakota, for example, 4 universities accept full ACE recommendations, Arkansas has 11, Nebraska has 24, and Oklahoma has 36 universities. While ACE's recommendations help veterans who would be at a serious disadvantage when applying for

enrollment without ACE, many schools do not recognize military credit.

Employment credit, finding viable employment remains one of the largest challenges facing veterans today. Many servicemembers seek civilian licensure for their experiences, often requiring training or varying levels of experience. Success in securing licensure or certification in all fields varies by geographic location and prerequisite experience, MOS, and the industry in which they are applying.

For example, within the nursing profession, South Dakota and North Carolina, the States only accept Army Licensed Practical Nurse Program (MOS 68WM6) for veterans to qualify to sit for the practical nurse program as a prerequisite to the test. Because nursing requirements are set by State regulation, different States, as well as different schools within those States, determine any credit, if any, for prior service.

Each industry and State determines prerequisite experience and licensure for certification. With such a high degree of variance, veterans could benefit greatly from a more centralized information resource. Ideally, industries and associations would invest in and promote translating specific MOSs into accreditation.

VFW recommends two broad scope studies; one on education credits and one on industry accreditation examining how and what the military experience translates into in the private sector.

When each study determines what is currently taking place across all branches of services and all MOSs, then recommendations can be made to expand successful programs. These programs can be incorporated into the National Resource Directory available through the TAP program.

To examine and expand current cooperation between DoD and the American Council on Education, we would recommend Congress fund a complete study of all MOSs across all branches of service. While not every MOS will have a clear transferable credit, schools and veterans alike will benefit from comprehensive process resulting in clearly defined military-educational equivalencies.

The VFW also recommends licensure and credentialing study to identify MOSs and their applicable civilian employment career counterparts. By examining direct skills and how they can be applied via State-by-State regulations, we could begin to see some of the standardization within industries.

Through this study we would like to see the high variance of accepted military skills evolve into a widely-accepted accreditation specific to each MOS and those that apply towards credit in that industry.

Madam Chairwoman, we appreciate the opportunity to testify today. And we look forward to answering any of your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hilleman appears on p. 30.]

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Thank you, Mr. Hilleman. We appreciate your testimony and recommendations.

Mr. Sharpe, you are now recognized.



**STATEMENT OF JOSEPH C. SHARPE, JR.**

Mr. SHARPE. Madam Chair, Members of the Subcommittee, I appreciate this opportunity to share the views of the American Legion on licensure and accreditation of transitioning veterans.

The Department of Defense provides some of the best vocational training in the Nation for its military personnel and establishes measures and evaluates performance standards for every occupation with the armed forces.

There are many occupational career fields in the armed forces that can easily translate to a civilian counterpart. Additionally, there are many occupations in the civilian workforce that require a license or a certification.

Upon separation, however, many servicemembers certified as proficient in their military occupational career are not licensed or certified to perform the comparable job in the civilian workforce, thus hindering chances for immediate civilian employment and delaying a career advancement.

This situation creates an artificial barrier to employment upon separation from military service. Military Occupational Specialties or ratings such as motor transport, corpsman or medic, need to undergo additional training once out of the service to work in their career path. This process slows down the veteran in obtaining gainful employment.

These servicemembers have enormous talents, skills, and attributes that they have used while in theater. However, because the tasks they performed are so unique and difficult to succinctly describe, they are left with a resume left wanting.

With over two million servicemembers having served in Iraq or Afghanistan, TAP and other transition programs need to be modernized to give relevant guidance and training to all transitioning servicemembers and their families.

The American Legion supports efforts to eliminate employment barriers that impede the transfer of military job skills to the civilian labor market. We also support efforts that require DoD to take appropriate steps to ensure that servicemembers be trained, tested, evaluated, and issued any license or accreditations that may be required in the civilian workforce prior to separation. The American Legion supports efforts to increase civilian labor market acceptance of the occupational training provided by the military.

Madam Chair, this concludes my statement. We appreciate the opportunity to present the view of American Legion.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Sharpe appears on p. 32.]

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Thank you, Mr. Sharpe. We appreciate those views.

Now, Dr. Zampieri, you are recognized.

**STATEMENT OF THOMAS ZAMPIERI, PH.D.**

Dr. ZAMPIERI. Madam Chair and Members of the Subcommittee, on behalf of Blinded Veterans Association, I appreciate the opportunity to testify here today on this issue.

A lot of my testimony has data and statistics on the problems that the returning servicemembers have in transitioning into the world of academics. One of the things that the testimony states is

the problems specifically with medics and corpsmen that have been mentioned by the other veteran service organizations (VSOs).

Yesterday, I found out that the actual number of individual medics that have been awarded the Combat Medical Badge for service in Iraq was 12,342 and 2,732 Army medics that have served in Afghanistan.

This is a large talent of highly skilled and educated individuals with medical experience. They come home to find out that their education in the military doesn't translate well into trying to get into physician assistant programs or into a lot of private or university programs. The average training that they have is just for the basic courses over 704 hours. And if you are a Special Forces medical skills medic, it is over 48 weeks of training.

It is interesting. There was a study that was done and published about a year ago, "From Soldier to Student, Bridging the Gaps of Transition." And when they surveyed the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, servicemembers, and the American Council on Education, they found that only 48 percent actually offered any kinds of academic advising or counseling. And most universities, even fewer, offered any special programs for those who have any kind of physical disabilities.

One of the big things is that the universities today I think do not want to sit and go through the transcripts that a veteran walks in the door with. And it was interesting. One of the things that came out of a statement from the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Offices, along with the Council For Higher Education, in regards to transfer and award of academic credits. It is important because it highlights that in the world of changing academic environment, the problems that the veterans face. In regards to this statement, they said that it is up to each individual academic institution to consider inter-institutional transfer of credits involving these considerations: the educational quality of the learning; the comparability of the nature, content, and level of the learning experience to that experience—that the program offers by the receiving institution.

Basically what happens is most of the university program directors that I talk to said that there are just large volumes of individuals applying. And it is much easier for someone in an admissions office to look at the standard transcript that a transferring student from another university walks in the door with than to spend the time, and manpower, and expense of sitting down and counseling a veteran who walks in with a variety of different types of military occupational training and skills. And that is sort of where the unfairness comes in in the system.

Today's medics and corpsmen are some of the most highly skilled in history. And it is a shame that they are not able to transfer those credit easily into the current environment in the universities. We also want to mention that we would recommend that the vocational rehabilitation benefits for assistance for housing allowance be increased, which would be helpful for those individuals entering into the vocational rehabilitation program, because currently the new GI Bill benefits are actually better for veterans.

And we would recommend some sort of a pilot military pathway demonstration program, a 5-year program for medics and corps-

men, that would provide grants to programs to actually help them in getting the credit hours that they need.

I thank you again for the opportunity to testify. And I am happy to answer any of your questions.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Zampieri appears on p. 35.]

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Thank you very much, Dr. Zampieri, for your insights and particular attention to the medics and the corpsmen and what we might be able to do. Dr. Patton, we will now recognize you as the final witness in this panel.

**STATEMENT OF MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER VINCE  
PATTON, III, USCG (RET.), ED.D.**

Dr. PATTON. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman and thank you Members of the Subcommittee for inviting us here today to discuss important issues associated with veteran employment. Today I will discuss what Military.com is doing to assist servicemembers in transferring their military training and experience to the civilian sector as they seek employment opportunities.

Military.com was founded in 1999 by a young Navy reservist to revolutionize the way our 30 million Americans with military affinity stay connected and informed. Today, Military.com is the largest military and veteran membership organization with more than 10 million members. And we are the ninth largest news destination site on the Internet.

In 2004, Military.com joined forces with Monster Worldwide to accelerate our growth and change the playing field for career and educational opportunities for active-duty personnel, as well as Guard and Reservists, veterans and military spouses. Monster's vision is bringing people together to advance their lives. And this partnership reinforces Military.com's members first ethos and mission.

Recognizing this, Military.com created a veteran career center using technology to successfully deliver a personalized experience with a variety of interactive tools and resources. We offer the largest veteran job board in the world featuring military-friendly employers as well as hundreds of thousands of job postings available through our Monster.com database.

We also offer personalized email alerts for new postings that match a veteran's resume and job interests, as well as resume writing tools, education and training information, mentoring through our Veteran Career Network, and electronic newsletters with news and employer information.

To help veterans begin their new career search, we developed our Military Skills Translator. We use the Department of Labor's online resource known as "O-Net," or Occupational Data Network as a baseline to translate current and older military occupational specialty codes into civilian occupations

Then Military.com is taking it one step further. We present the veteran with equivalent jobs currently posted on the Monster job board, including those posted by thousands of military employers specifically looking for veterans. The veteran can immediately apply to one of these jobs from our site or review the job postings and learn what specific experiences, skills, education, and training employers are seeking for this type of position. This information

can help the job seeker better “civilianize” their military experience on their resume and best communicate the skill, knowledge, and abilities they acquired while in service.

Through the Military Skills Translator, not only are veterans empowered to apply to currently available jobs, they can also see members of our Military.com’s Veteran Career Network who have indicated they held that same Military Occupational Specialty.

One of our fastest growing services that is still in beta form is a mentor network that connects veterans seeking new careers with employed veterans as well as military supporters. Military.com members who volunteer for this feature create a profile containing details about their military experience, professional interests, and their current job position and employer.

Veterans using this feature can find a career network mentor by company, government agency, career field, industry or geographic location. Once the veteran job seeker has identified someone with whom they would like to network, he or she can contact a mentor directly through our secure Military.com email tool.

Since the implementation of our Veteran Career Network in 2007, over one million Military.com members have signed on to network with other veterans and help transitioning service-members jumpstart their civilian careers.

Military.com’s success over the past 10 years is also attributable to the strength of our partnerships with the private and public sectors, both online and offline. For example, we partner with the Noncommissioned Officers Association to host more than 30 veteran career fairs annually on or near military installations around the country. We have tremendous participation from military-friendly employers who come ready to hire veterans for their skills and working with organizations such as Helmets to Hardhats, which focuses on building and construction trade occupations, Troops to Teachers, which helps them go into the teaching profession.

The American Legion also attends our career fairs to assist veteran job seekers with important details about their benefits. And State veteran service offices frequently attend our events as well.

I would like to thank the Subcommittee for this opportunity to present this testimony and share what Military.com is doing in making a positive impact on veteran employment.

Madam Chairwoman and Members of this Subcommittee, this concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions that you may have. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Patton appears on p. 38.]

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Thank you, Dr. Patton.

I will start with a couple of questions for you. From all the Military.com’s transition career tools, which ones have been in the greatest demand by servicemembers and veterans? Is it the Mentor Network.

Dr. PATTON. Yes, ma’am. The Mentor Network definitely is one of the best in demand, because what we have found is by not just having the technology itself. But our veterans would like to have somebody to connect with one another. And this is probably one of the successes of the Internet as a whole that people are connecting together with one another.

By using our Veteran Career Network where the veterans are connecting and talking to each other, helping them with writing resumes, that has been very, very helpful.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. For Mr. Hilleman and Mr. Sharpe, you had both stated in your testimony one of the recommendations, Mr. Hilleman, was to fund a study of all MOSs.

Mr. Sharpe, you had stated that it would be helpful to have a system that could be devised to translate the full nature of a servicemember's skills and abilities. Do you think that having a study that would look at all MOSs and having a system designed in that way would provide something that Military.com either currently isn't providing or is not capable of providing at this point.

Mr. HILLEMAN. Madam Chairwoman, currently ACE does study specific schoolhouses and specific MOSs, with the exception of the Air Force, because the Air Force has their own junior college or community college that gives transferable credit for education.

But the contract between DoD and ACE is at the request of DoD. So it does not study every single MOS or every single course. It is just what DoD has contracted with ACE to study. That and ACE currently only has—partners with our credit reciprocity or credit acceptance at 2,300 universities nationwide. But the list is not fully encompassing. We would like to see if we could improve the number of universities that accept military credits.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Yes. So you are focused on the study, so that it would look at the transfer of credits into colleges and universities versus the career transition into direct employment.

Mr. HILLEMAN. I think that there needs to be a wall between two studies to focus on what is going on with ACE and currently with DoD. And then take a look at also on an industry-to-industry basis and State by State. The Army Nursing Program that we mentioned in our testimony, nowhere on the site does it say that Air Force, Navy, or Coast Guard nurses are accepted to sit for the same test that the Army nurses are accepted to sit for.

So there are high degrees of variance from State to State. And I think that is the largest challenge to developing some agreement where credits transfer directly from the military into the private sector.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Mr. Sharpe.

Mr. SHARPE. I agree with everything that Mr. Hilleman has stated. But also the other thing we are really focusing on is we would like to see a lot of this done prior to the person transitions out of the military.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Right.

Mr. SHARPE. They should know exactly what their MOS training will allow them to do once they leave.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Well, that raises another very important question on TAP. I know Secretary Jefferson is committed to reforming TAP.

But I think, Dr. Patton, you had some testimony as it relates to your perspective on how TAP perhaps doesn't always provide servicemembers what they need. I have had a mixed bag of responses from my constituents recently. Two different 20-year-plus members of different branches of the Armed Forces who separated from service. One thought TAP was fabulous, and the other one

thought it was completely useless. They didn't take the program in the same place. Otherwise, I think we would have had more consistent response to the program.

What are your thoughts as it relates to TAP or how do we restructure this, if necessary?

Dr. PATTON. Madam Chairwoman, as I was going through my TAP class, my needs were a little bit different than some of the other people that were sitting in that TAP class. Sitting next to me was a young man with 3 years in the Coast Guard at Grade E-4. He has got a total different focus on what is going to happen at the end of his time as compared to mine.

I am getting a retirement. My resume is a little bit more padded than his is. He is focused on trying to get into using education. So what happens in the TAP class is that I have no problem with the content. And I don't think anyone does. The problem is that it is not a one size fit all.

But the system has kind of set that to be by virtue of getting everybody with different military walks of life into one setting and trying to come up with something of a commonality.

What probably needs to happen, in my opinion, is more of looking at how we can reinforce that information before TAP, during TAP, as well as after TAP. So the whole TAP process is something that is evolving that should continue on well past the individual leaving the service.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Any other comments on TAP? I am over time. But I want to recognize the Ranking Member and come back for another round.

Mr. SHARPE. Well we know that Department of Labor is in the midst of redoing their entire TAP program. They are modernizing the program, something that we strongly agree with.

A lot of the recommendations that are going into this new program are coming from many of the businesses that sit on their Veterans Advisory Board.

A couple of years ago we all went to a number of TAP programs across the country and looked to see how it could be improved. And a lot of the recommendations that came from various business owners we just thought it was a great idea. So we do think they are on the right road.

We are still concerned with the fact that many servicemembers are still not getting access to the TAP program.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. I would also like to explore with you this issue of the challenge of State by State and the licensure and certification. But I will do so after recognizing the Ranking Member for his questions. Mr. Bilirakis.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you so much. And most of the material you covered, Madam Chair, so good job.

I do have a question for Mr. Sharpe. Should the counsel for licensure enforcement be a member of the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education?

Mr. SHARPE. I believe so.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Again, that is another big issue where an individual leaves the military with a certain amount of training. And depending on the State that individual resides in, their credentials are accepted or not.

We do believe there should be one national standard for a lot of the military skills that folks are leaving as they leave. And I think it would be great if an individual like that was to sit on one of the councils.

I thank you, Madam Chair. I yield back.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Thank you, Mr. Bilirakis.

The Ranking Member had mentioned in his opening statement the issue of the fact that the National Governors' Association wasn't able to help us out today.

I am wondering if any of your organizations have reached out to the National Governors' Association and what kind of response you have received on the issue of licensure and certification and credentialing.

No. Well let me raise just something to consider. You know, right now we are having a rigorous debate. Although in some instances not a healthy discussion but a rigorous debate about the role of the Federal Government. There is a serious challenge when you are dealing with 50 different State sets of standards.

This is why some in the industry want us to pass a renewable electricity standard, because one State has no mandate, one State has 10 percent, one State has 20 percent. You have folks that are businesses that are operating across States, and they would like some certainty. They would like essentially for the Federal Government to come in and preempt State laws and at least set a minimum.

My question for each of you is, should there be a discussion recognizing the challenges with 50 different State standards. We have also dealt with this issue in this Congress and in past Congresses about State law governing child custody disputes when we are dealing with a national military and whether or not we leave their legal rights, whether for child custody or employment, up to the States or whether we have national standards.

Should there be a discussion about national certification, or the transfer of military skills so that we can provide some certainty and assist our military men and women who are separating from service to transition more effectively into the workforce, especially in high employment growth sectors of the economy.

Mr. SHARPE. There should be a national standard. Not only that, but we have advocated for the federalization of the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program specialists (DVOPs) and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) for the Department of Labor, because right now you have 50 different programs. And a veteran shouldn't have to go from one State to another to try and get certain basic services.

Right now a lot of this depends on how the State wants to allocate money that comes from the Federal Government. And we feel like the Federal Government should be in charge of it.

Since the veteran is—you know, he has deployed by the national government. So as he transitions out, that responsibility should rely on the Federal Government and not the State.

Mr. HILLEMAN. Madam Chairwoman, you have unearthed probably one of the longest standing debates in our democracy, in our Federal system, States' rights versus Federal. Without weighing—

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. I don't know that I have unearthed it. I think it has been on 24/7 cable is that debate. But anyway I appreciate that.

Mr. HILLEMAN. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Maybe in this instance, we are giving it something that is an important and healthy discussion we could on what we do to best serve a veteran.

Mr. HILLEMAN. Yes, ma'am. Without weighing in on the philosophical issue, the practical issue is that each industry has specific standards that are recognized State by State.

I think of my fiancée as an example. She is a social worker. And she is licensed in Virginia. She is a licensed clinical social worker. But in order for her to practice exclusively in the District of Columbia, she must transfer her license, which is a cost to her.

When you start talking about military occupational specialties, some of the licensing is important at the State level and some of it is not, information technology (IT) for example. If you have a Red Hat security certification, your employer, whether it is small, local company or a national, huge or international company, recognizes the certification, not the State. And it doesn't require State certification.

However, as Mr. Zampieri points out, the medical industry is strictly governed by States. And I think we need to dig down and figure out what States are giving licensing and certification or allowing individuals at least to sit for those tests and why. We need to understand practically what makes the Army program better than the Navy's nursing program. And is that reasonable?

And I don't think that any one of us would have the depth of insight in there to answer those questions. That is why we are calling for a study to drill down into those specific industries.

Dr. ZAMPIERI. I would echo that. I think one of the big problems having been around the world for a little while in the world of medicine and coming out of the service in 1975, I was one of those licensed practical nurses (LPNs) that was allowed to take my boards back then.

So in the State of Georgia and when I moved to New Jersey, when the military transferred me to New Jersey, New Jersey told me they wouldn't accept my boards, even though I still had the same rank as a sergeant in the Army.

It was just an example that, you know, we fast forward to the future. And here we are today in the world of Internet and everything else. And we are in the same dilemma.

I think there are two things. One is if, you know, you thought health care was a problem. And the debate there if you enter into the world of certification, licensure, and universities, I wish anybody luck, because it is a dangerous animal and especially in the world of medical colleges and universities and stuff.

I think the carrot should be that universities should—who accept Federal money, that will get them, because they all do, should be, you know, encouraged to take the time to look at the individual servicemember's record of education, you know, for whatever ways that you do that. And then, you know, I think that it is interesting.

The military has worked to try to—like for example medics and corpsmen. All of the training now is done at one location at Fort



Sam Houston, Texas, at Brooke Army Medical Center at the Uniformed Services Health Sciences Academy.

So what has happened is the good news is I think the services are working towards the University Services Health Sciences Academy where they could also help with this by giving college credits for the courses that the individuals complete, which makes the transferring of that easier. When a person comes off active duty and they are a veteran, they apply.

And then this third part of this is the universities have all admitted in this survey, just in 2008, that very few of them do any kind of academic counseling for veterans. And there are some interesting pilot things that are going on at the universities.

The University of Arizona started a vets clinic, meaning not a medical clinic but a vets education counseling center. And they staffed it with Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF) volunteers originally. And then they actually found that there was so much interest on the campus that they actually began to pay interns to work in that office.

And they did the full range of, you know, whether it was a problem with financial aid, or whether it was a problem with again academic credits for their courses and their training, whether it was just a place where veterans could go to talk to other veterans when, you know, things build up. It was interesting. And then there are some successes out there like that.

But I can tell you, I have been licensed in six different States as a physician assistant. Wow. Yeah, I mean, you run into the whole host of problems with State licensing medical boards. I mean, everybody is going to jump into this fray.

And I guess my recommendations are just that, you know, maybe if there is some ways of incentives for the universities to try to work with veterans, it may be a little easier until whatever financial ways or whatever.

And then, you know, work with the Department of Defense on trying to encourage them to—like he mentioned the Air Force already gives college credits for a lot of the different training that they have despite the—

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. I appreciate your thoughts and your recommendations. I think both on side of the incentives to gear more services at the university level towards student veterans to work through some of these unique issues.

But I think also, Mr. Sharpe you had mentioned in your testimony encouraging the DoD to do more on the front end before separation of service, either in coordination/collaboration with governors, State certification boards. Let us just start with some identifiable areas where there is high need on high-growth areas, as well as with the university community.

Mr. Bilirakis, anything final for this panel.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. I think we are okay here.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Okay. Thank you all. We appreciate your testimony, your insights and recommendations, and your continued service to our Nation's veterans.

I would now like to invite the second panel to the witness table. Joining us today on the second panel of witnesses is the Honorable Raymond Jefferson, Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment

and Training Service (VETS), U.S. Department of Labor; Mr. John Campbell, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense, Wounded Warrior Care and Transition Policy, U.S. Department of Defense, who is accompanied by Mr. Ron Horne, Deputy Director of Transition Assistance Program, Wounded Warrior Care, Transition Policy, the United States Department of Defense. We are also joined by Ms. Margarita Cocker, Deputy Director, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Service, Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Thank you all for your written testimony, which has been made part of the hearing record. We appreciate welcoming you to this Subcommittee.

Assistant Secretary Jefferson, we are going to begin with you. You are now recognized for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENTS OF HON. RAYMOND M. JEFFERSON, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR; JOHN R. CAMPBELL, DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (WOUNDED WARRIOR CARE AND TRANSITION POLICY), U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE; ACCOMPANIED BY RON HORNE, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, WOUNDED WARRIOR CARE, TRANSITION POLICY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE; AND MARGARITA COCKER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICE, VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**STATEMENT OF HON. RAYMOND M. JEFFERSON**

Mr. JEFFERSON. Chairman Herseth Sandlin, Ranking Member Bilirakis, Members of the Committee, we are thrilled to be here. Thank you for the opportunity to be here as a witness.

Secretary Solis and I remain passionately committed to helping veterans and transitioning servicemembers translate their military education experience into meaningful careers and opportunities.

We are doing this in very close cooperation with Congress and many of our partners who are here today, the Department of Defense, VA, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Homeland Security, the veteran service organizations, State workforce agencies, other government entities, non-profits, and the private sector.

So what are we doing? We have three broad categories of activities. I will call them prepare, provide and protect. We are preparing transitioning servicemembers and veterans for meaningful careers. We are providing them with access to opportunities and careers. And we are protecting their employment rights.

And for all of that, we are doing it with transformation, innovation and excellence. We are transforming our current programs. We are innovating and launching new initiatives. And we are benchmarking everything we do to best practices to ensure that we are striving and achieving excellence.

Let me break down some of these for us today. Preparation, the Transition Assistance Program has been spoken about a great deal.

For the past 17 years, TAP has not been fully modernized. Right now, today, it is 180 PowerPoint slides given over 2½ days. For the first time in 17 years, we are transforming and modernizing this program as we speak.

There are going to be six components to the new TAP. The first is pre-work, predictive assessments to determine a servicemember's employability readiness. This is going to allow us to segment, which gets to component number two, three different types of TAP, one for servicemembers who are highly ready, one for moderately ready, and one for what I will call entry level of readiness.

We are also going to bring in best practice content, mental training, life and career planning, stress reduction techniques, storytelling, how to communicate your value proposition, networking, and how you transition from a military context to a civilian context.

The third component is experiential facilitation, learning by doing, getting away from the PowerPoint slides.

Fourth component, after TAP support. After you finish TAP, you have been drinking through a fire hose for 2½ days. You can go online and make a phone call to get customized application of what you learned for your personal situation.

Fifth component, a best practice virtual resource with classes, and videos. So you can go back and retrain on things you want to refresh.

And sixth component, performance metrics. One point seven million people have gone through TAP. We have no idea what their feedback is, so three moments of truth. How do you feel about the program when you finished it, how valuable was it when you were actually going through your job search, and how helpful was it to help you transition? We are doing the Bidder's Conference on August 11th. And we are going into contract in September.

Number two, preparation and also providing access to career opportunities. Last time I was here I mentioned that we are going to be launching a pilot program with Job Corps. We launched it 2 weeks ago. And I am pleased to say 300 veterans are going to be in this pilot. The three sites are in Kentucky, Indiana, and Missouri.

This is going to be an all-expense paid, all transportation provided, housing provided, 6–8-month customized, accelerated training program leading to a credential or certificate, leading to a job and 21 months of post-employment support. They will get training in a broad array of skills and trades such as green jobs, health care, IT, and construction.

I want to thank the stakeholders in this room for helping us get the word out. Madam Chairwoman, we would be very grateful for your assistance, and Representative Bilirakis yours as well, to help us get the news of this important initiative out to other Members of Congress.

The third thing I would like to talk about is in the area of providing access, increasing engagement with employers. We are doing a pilot program with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. We are going to launch that on Labor Day in ten States. What this is going to do is for the first time instead of our State directors talking to one employer or chief executive officer (CEO) at a time, they are going

to talk to 100, 150 CEOs at a time to communicate the value of hiring a veteran and how you hire a veteran in your State or your city.

We are also training our State directors in customer service, and networking, and public speaking and presentation.

Finally, the Federal Hiring Initiative. We are working with the Department of Veterans Affairs as a co-chair with OPM and all of the Federal Government agencies to increase the hiring of veterans.

We are doing a boot camp today, yesterday, and tomorrow to train all the hiring managers and the veterans employment program managers on best practices for hiring veterans, where to find them, how to translate their resumes, how to treat them properly so they become long-term members of the organization.

I spoke to Director Barry this morning. And I am pleased to say that for the past 5 months, the number of veteran hirings in the Federal Government is up.

I will just say that next month is my 1-year anniversary serving as your Assistant Secretary. I hope you see that our agency is fulfilling our promises and our commitments. We are passionate about what we do. We look forward to your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Jefferson appears on p. 41.]

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Thank you for your testimony and your commitment. Assistant Secretary Jefferson, we have a number of questions both as it relates to your work on TAP and some issues that came up in a previous hearing 3 years ago.

Mr. JEFFERSON. Okay.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. So I don't necessarily expect that you will be—but they are questions we want to pose, important followup of commitments that were made by some of your predecessors in the agency.

Mr. JEFFERSON. We are ready to go.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. I look forward to visiting with you about that.

Mr. Campbell, you are now recognized. Thank you for being with us today.

#### **STATEMENT OF JOHN R. CAMPBELL**

Mr. CAMPBELL. Thank you. Good afternoon, Madam Chairwoman, Ranking Member Bilirakis. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Department of Defense's role in assisting transitioning servicemembers obtain licenses and certifications while in the service as they transition to civilian life.

Education and training are imperative to the meaningful employment and quality of life for our separating servicemembers. Servicemembers are encouraged to take full advantage of their educational opportunities and training programs afforded while they are on active duty. Some of these programs include tuition assistance, United States Military Apprenticeship Program, Army and Navy COOL, and the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

DoD also provides separating servicemembers with useful information and assistance in all aspects of the transition process. This includes preparation for post-military employment as they re-enter civilian life. Attaining a civilian credential promotes professional

growth and communicates to employers the transferability of military training and occupational experience. It is crucial to the transition process that servicemembers are able to take full advantage of their military experience in order to reach their full employment potential after they leave the military.

The Transition Assistance Program, known as TAP, remains the primary platform used by DoD, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

TAP informs, educates, and provides one-on-one coaching to transitioning servicemembers. When accomplished, this enables servicemembers to be strong competitors for career opportunities in the civilian workforce.

The current program has been in place for nearly two decades without major enhancements. And the original design was not intended for today's demand. To strengthen TAP and reinforce its value to servicemembers and their families, we will be putting initiatives in place to move TAP from a traditional event-driven approach at the end of service to a modern, innovative life cycle approach, which will begin at the start of service.

DoD is working to implement this strategic plan with specific focus on information technology, strategic messaging, and personalized coaching. The end-state for the TAP overhaul will be a population of beneficiaries who have the knowledge, skills, and abilities that empower them to make informed career decisions, be competitive in the global marketplace, and become positive contributors to their community.

We continue to provide licensure and certification information in a wide range of ways and different formats to appeal to individuals learning styles. A key component of effective licensure and certification is introducing the information to the servicemember early in their careers, not just at the time of separation. Waiting until the end of a military service to educate the war fighter on licensure and certification is too late.

DoD and the military services have significantly increased their focus on licensure and certification. My written statement provides details on the additional programs and tools put in place by DoD and the services.

These efforts include analysis to identify potential gaps between military training and civilian credentialing requirements along with providing extensive information on resources available to fill those gaps.

The Department understands there is a strong consensus within Congress and the veterans' community that more needs to be done to help servicemembers translate their military occupational specialties into civilian sector language.

DoD recognizes more can be done. And we continue our efforts toward this goal. Since the Committee's hearing on this subject in September 2007, we have taken the following steps.

We have implemented a mandatory credentialing program for information assurance workforce, both military and civilians throughout the Department. The Navy has implemented a discretionary program that allows sailors to obtain government-paid vouchers for credentialing exams mapped to their rating, job, or occupational specialty.

For our wounded, ill and injured personnel, we have worked to expedite security clearances to assist in civilian-sector employment for those expected to be medically separated.

The DoD-DOL Credentialing Working Group has identified ten major occupational specialties that might require minimal additional training or minor adjustments to existing curriculum, which could result in certification. They also analyzed data on all Military Occupational Specialties, including the National Guard and Reserves.

The working group has concluded—conducted a crosswalk of those specialty codes that correlates to the ten highest growth civilian occupations. They also began an analysis comparing the military training to civilian credentialing requirements.

In closing, the Department acknowledges the importance of providing servicemembers with clear and definitive information on licensure and credentials during their military careers. Providing this information early on allows our war fighters to plan and seek out any additional training required to achieve their goals.

To that end, the Department, in collaboration with their partners at DOL and the VA, is revamping TAP as we move into the next decade. Their transition assistance process must be transformed to occur throughout the military life cycle from the time of accession to reintegration back into the community. This is not a single event that occurs at the time of separation or retirement or in the case of demobilizing, deactivating National Guard and Reserves when they leave active-duty status.

Madam Chairwoman, this concludes my statement. I will be happy to answer your questions, or Ranking Member Bilirakis' questions, or any others who may have. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Campbell appears on p. 45.]

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Thank you, Mr. Campbell.

Ms. Cocker, welcome to the Subcommittee. You are now recognized.

#### **STATEMENT OF MARGARITA COCKER**

Ms. COCKER. Thank you. Madam Chairwoman and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to appear before you today to discuss how VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Program helps servicemembers apply their Military Occupational Specialties to employment in the civilian sector.

VR&E strives to ensure a seamless transition for servicemembers and veterans through early outreach and intervention. VA's vocational rehabilitation counselors and employment coordinators leverage servicemembers' and veterans' transferable skills whenever possible, while keeping the focus on individuals' current level of abilities, aptitudes, as well as their future career potential. VA greatly appreciates the opportunity to discuss this important topic.

VR&E's primary mission is to assist servicemembers and veterans with service-connected disabilities prepare for and obtain meaningful and sustainable employment through the provision of robust services individually tailored to each individual's needs.

Services are provided at our 57 regional office locations and over 100 out-based VR&E locations. VR&E services begin with com-

prehensive evaluations to help servicemembers and veterans understand their interests, aptitudes, and transferable skills.

Next our vocational exploration phase focuses their potential career goals based on labor-market demands and market requirements. This process helps each veteran or servicemember make informed choices and participate in the development of their rehabilitation plan that to the maximum extent possible builds on his or her transferable skills towards an ultimate career goal.

To help these individuals achieve their rehabilitation goals, VR&E may provide a broad range of employment services such as translation of military experience to civilian skill sets using industry standard transferable skills assessments; short-term training geared toward augmenting existing skills that increase employability, such as certification preparation tests and sponsorship of certification; long-term training, including on-the-job training, apprenticeship training, and college-level training or services that support self-employment; and direct job placement services, including resume development, job-seeking-skills training, and post-placement follow-up services.

Licensing and credentialing assistance is provided as needed to facilitate employment in a particular individual's specific occupation. For example, many information technology jobs require certification, while nursing and mental health counseling fields require licensure. For veterans and servicemembers with more severe injuries and barriers to employment, additional leading-edge certifications can also be provided to make them more competitive.

The goal of each VR&E rehabilitation plan is to maximize the individual's transferable skills, match his or her interests and skill sets with labor-market demand, ensure compatibility of the job with existing disability issues, use adaptive technology whenever possible, and help the veteran or servicemember enter the job market at a level on par with his or her peer group and into a career position in which he or she can thrive, even if his or her disability should worsen.

I would like to emphasize the importance of transferable skills assessments and corresponding licensure or credentialing. During the vocational exploration phase, VR&E counselors identify servicemembers and veterans military and civilian transferable skills and discuss these skills with them.

The VR&E program conducts thorough assessments of veterans' interests, aptitudes, and abilities and then provides necessary services to ensure that exiting servicemembers and veterans are able to compete for and achieve the highest level of civilian employment for which they could qualify.

VR&E counselors help individuals capitalize on their transferable skills when developing the plans for future civilian career goals, while also ensuring that interests, aptitudes, and abilities are matched up to these goals. Once servicemembers' and veterans' career goals are identified, VR&E tailors individualized and comprehensive services to ensure employability in their chosen fields, including proper credentialing, education, and licensing.

The focus on basing the next career step on transferable skills enables these individuals to maximize their existing skills and ultimately obtain careers at a more advanced level.

The challenges our disabled servicemembers and veterans face while in transition are an urgent priority for VR&E and for VA. Building upon the excellent skills obtained in the military makes these individuals more marketable and assists them in qualifying for more technical and advanced career opportunities.

VR&E focuses on enhancing preexisting certifiable and or licensed skills attained during servicemembers' and veterans' military experience, thus maximizing the investment in training they have made during their service on active duty.

Madam Chairwoman, this concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or Members of the Subcommittee may have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Cocker appears on p. 51.]

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Thank you, Ms. Cocker.

Now according to your written testimony, and I think you have touched on it just now as well, the VA provides certification preparation tests. Can you specify for which specialties and how you determine if a veteran's eligible for participation in the preparation tests?

Ms. COCKER. Yes, ma'am. Preparation tests can be provided to any servicemember or veteran that requires it in order to be able to pass the exam. The process will involve the VRC, the vocational rehabilitation counselor, sitting down with the veteran and preparing the rehabilitation plan, including any preparation tests that might be needed.

Depending on the industry standard for those types of exams and whether a preparation exam is typically expected to help the individual pass, that could be a given in the rehabilitation plan that the preparation tests would be written in.

However, if during the progress of the plan if it had not been written into the plan, it can be added later if the veteran feels that he/she is not confident enough to pass the test without a preparation course.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. On average, how long would it take for a servicemember or veteran to complete a transferable skills assessment from the point when they go through the vocational exploration phase, then receive an individualized and comprehensive plan, until they are employed in their chosen field? Do you have a rough average?

Ms. COCKER. I do not have an average. I can take that question for the record. However, what I can say is that that is very individualized and dependent upon the level of education that that veteran will need to complete to get to the point of licensing and certification, if it is required for that occupation.

The evaluation process, the comprehensive assessment, which includes the transferable skills assessment is conducted during the initial phase. And I can certainly provide average numbers for the evaluation and planning phase. I can take that question.

[The VA subsequently provided the following information:]

An evaluation and assessment of current skills is provided after a veteran is determined eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) services and meets with one of VA's vocational rehabilitation counselors. Counselors can use a multitude of transferable skills analysis (TSA) tools in assessing the skills and abilities of each veteran and developing a comprehensive plan of services and career goals. The counselor gathers information about the veteran's



educational and occupational experience and uses that information to complete a TSA. In some cases, counselors use their expert knowledge of occupational requirements, without a need for a structured tool, to analyze the veteran's skills.

The TSA does not impose a delay in the processing and development of a plan of services. The analysis itself can be completed in 1 to 3 hours, depending on the complexity of the veteran's background and disability conditions. Once the skills are identified and a job goal is selected with the veteran, continued development of the plan occurs until all services are identified to enable the veteran to reach his/her goals. VA's goal to complete the evaluation and planning phase in an average of 105 days, and the national average as of June 2010 was 113 days. The average number of days it takes a veteran to complete a program from plan development to the point of successful employment in his/her field was 978 days as of May 2010.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Okay. I appreciate that. Can you give any examples from different career fields where it has been particularly challenging to secure license or certification?

Ms. COCKER. I don't have any specific occupations where I can say it has been challenging to achieve that.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Any States?

Ms. COCKER. I can take that for the record though and research it further.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. States, too?

Ms. COCKER. I do not have any—

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Okay.

Ms. COCKER [continuing]. Specific details on States where it has been more challenging than others. But I can take that question for the record.

[The VA subsequently provided the following information:]

VR&E counselors work diligently to develop rehabilitation plans that utilize each Veteran's transferable skills from active duty. Some veterans enter the VR&E program with marketable skills, but must take additional courses or pass exams to meet licensure or certification requirements to obtain employment in their field. Counselors work closely with schools and educational facilities to streamline this process to create a smooth transition for Veterans.

Counselors also work with programs that assist veterans in obtaining degrees that apply a significant amount of military credit. The National College Counseling Center is one program that evaluates a veteran's training record and works to identify colleges and degrees that will accept military training. VR&E Service encourages all VA vocational rehabilitation counselors to use programs such as the National College Counseling Center to assist veterans in receiving the credit they deserve for their military service.

Strict requirements by schools and certification and licensing organizations create a barrier for Veterans getting back to work quickly using the skills obtained while in service. Most educational facilities and training programs align core class requirements with State and national licensing and certifying bodies. For example, the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians, the Dental Assisting National Board, and the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence have stringent requirements that make it difficult for veterans to use existing skills to obtain suitable employment in those fields. State certification and licensing barriers also affect veterans using current skill sets, and the requirements vary from State to State. Although national certifying and licensing organizations play a role in course requirements, many schools design their curricula to meet the needs of 18-year-old high school graduates, with little flexibility to apply the credit Veterans have earned through military training.

VR&E counselors will continue working with veterans to utilize their current skills to the greatest extent possible in returning to civilian employment. When veterans require additional training, certification and/or licensing to become employed, VR&E counselors incorporate those requirements into veterans' rehabilitation plans and funds those requirements.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Thank you, Ms. Cocker.

Okay. Assistant Secretary Jefferson, I am going to start with one of these questions. But if it is something that you would want to go back and take a closer look at the record of our hearing on September 20th, 2007, and get back to us, I will just submit the other questions to you in writing.

We did have a previous hearing about 3 years ago on the issue of licensure and certification. A witness informed us that in Fort Sam Houston after Army medics graduate from the medical training center, they have the option of taking an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) exam.

We were informed that it took 3 years to get all 50-plus jurisdictions to agree to accept this one exam that was a combination of written, oral, and practical. Do you know if this program—or maybe Mr. Campbell could answer. Are you aware of whether or not this program is still in existence at Fort Sam Houston or any other similar programs in the country that have worked to try to get all the jurisdictions to agree to take the results of the exam for purposes of their certification?

Mr. JEFFERSON. Sure. When I was in the 3rd Ranger Battalion I actually went through the EMT program and got a complete certification myself. So I remember going through that program.

I don't know what the current status of it is. I will—if my colleague has—John Campbell has anything to share, I welcome that. But what we will do is we will go back, we will research that, and provide information for the record.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Mr. Campbell.

Mr. CAMPBELL. No.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Mr. Horne.

Mr. JEFFERSON. I will go ahead and take it for the record for both of us. And we will liaison with DoD to come up with an answer.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. I would appreciate that, because if it is still in existence, then we also need to look at whether or not it has been replicated or could be replicated in other areas.

Mr. JEFFERSON. Absolutely.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. I mean this is what we are looking to. This is essentially the model we need—

Mr. JEFFERSON. Yes.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN [continuing]. In trying to streamline it so it doesn't take 3 years.

Mr. JEFFERSON. Exactly.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. That we have things that we can point to that are working effectively—

Mr. JEFFERSON. Yes.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN [continuing]. That has set the precedent that might ease the way.

Out of that hearing, there were workgroups that we talked about that had been set up under the guidance of Public Law 109-461. I will submit some of these other questions with regard to what came out of that hearing and sort of progress that you could provide to date on the work of either the workgroups, working with service schools and industries. There was a solicitation for grant applications in the 2007 funding year. There was a DoD/DOL

credentialing working group. So I am going to submit those questions—

Mr. JEFFERSON. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN [continuing]. To the both of you. Then we will followup.

[The DOL subsequently provided the following information:]

We are not aware of whether this program is still in existence at Ft. Sam Houston, or if there are similar programs in the country. We have provided this question to the DoD for their review. [The DoD provided a response in the answer to Question 1 of the Post-Hearing Questions and Responses for the Record, which appears on p. 65.]

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Hopefully we have the program at Fort Sam Houston that sort of serves as a model for where we can make more progress.

Are you aware, Assistant Secretary Jefferson, if there is a model whereby someone at the State level may have coordinated licensing and accreditation with State boards to allow National Guard and Reservists to directly transfer their license or certification to civilian employment in a State?

Mr. JEFFERSON. Right now we are working with General Stultz of the Army Reserve, and also with Assistant Secretary Dennis McCarthy to look at some of the current programs out there.

I think that there is a variety of initiatives, Madam Chairwoman, many of them effective but not all integrated. I know that there is one called GAPA.

So we are working—we are reaching out to the Guard and Reserve. They have been very supportive, very helpful, and collaborative to find out what exactly is the nature of the apprenticeship initiative, and how we can look at it to broaden it, increase its scope, et cetera. So that is something that we are aware of and we are looking at. And how we can, you know, make it more robust, more effective.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Okay. Mr. Campbell, Mr. Horne, are you working with State adjutant generals or others who may have been point people in State departments for military and veterans' affairs who have tried to coordinate efforts with State boards for purpose of National Guard men and women?

Mr. HORNE. Madam Chairwoman, we don't really know of any specific programs. But we will certainly get back to you if you give us that for the record. And we will collaborate with our partners at the National Guard Bureau and our other partners at the Reserve components, as Mr. Jefferson has already indicated.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Okay. I know that Mr. Boozman and I, since we come from smaller States where we have had governors and adjutant generals who I think have been very proactive as have some other folks trying to grapple with some of what their National Guard men and women face when they come back from deployments.

You know, even this is sort of 3 years removed, our combat tempo remains the same, even if it is higher on one front than the other from what it was 3 years ago.

I think especially in high unemployment that continues to plague the recovery, as we seek to strengthen and sustain that, we really

need to get moving on this. I appreciate the efforts you have undertaken during the tenure of the positions you have currently held.

But we are more than happy to work with you and your agencies to get the governors more involved here, not just for National Guard men and women but for our active duty who are separating from service and are going home to where they grew up or staying in the State from the base where they recently separated.

Especially for the younger veterans where the unemployment rates are remaining at a staggeringly high rate, we want to move quickly to identify if there are programs out there. If not, what we do to facilitate this in a more aggressive way.

Mr. JEFFERSON. And, Madam Chairwoman, we have an Advisory Committee for Veterans' Employment of which the National Governors' Association is a member. And we are reaching out to them to get a higher level of engagement and participation in the Committee going forward.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Thank you.

Mr. CAMPBELL. Madam Chairwoman.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Yes.

Mr. CAMPBELL. There is a meeting scheduled next week, I was just informed, that will be meeting. There is a State liaison office within the DoD. And we are meeting with that group next week to talk about issues that involve the States.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Okay.

Mr. CAMPBELL. So we will raise this.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Thank you. Maybe just a final question on TAP. I appreciated in your oral testimony as well as the written testimony, and we have talked about this before, Assistant Secretary Jefferson, and I know, Mr. Campbell, you had mentioned TAP in your testimony as well.

We heard from the prior panel just how we can customize it. I was pleased as you were taking us through sort of the six different phases.

Mr. JEFFERSON. Six components, yes.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. The fourth phase or the fourth component is the customizing.

Mr. JEFFERSON. Yes.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. I mean, just as you think about the program theoretically, is this something where you feel that there is a responsibility among the agencies to just provide sort of a minimum amount of information that every servicemember should be equipped with before separating from service. All servicemembers should get at least a floor of information. Then from there on out, depending on the particular servicemember's unique circumstances, desires, wants, needs, that you ratchet it up from there, going sort of to the issue of customizing.

Rather than taking the time now in this hearing, because we will want to have others as we have had in the past specifically on TAP, I just want us to take a step back and just sort of say theoretically what do we think this program should be providing.

Mr. JEFFERSON. Yes.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. How do we deal with the issue of the ongoing concern many of us have that not all servicemembers are getting access to it? As you know, it is mandatory for the Marines, but

it is not mandatory for anybody else. I would just be curious from the two of you how you see it. Well, and Ms. Cocker, you as well. I mean, what is the base that we should be providing here?

Mr. JEFFERSON. Yes. It is a great question. And it is one that we have been reflecting on. And I think we are making a lot of progress, because it is a very exciting program potentially. That is what it can be.

I will tell you that on September 10th, VETS is meeting with the Deputy Secretary of Defense and the Deputy Secretary of Labor to talk in detail about what we can do in TAP to make a significant step forward in the scope, the reach, the impact. And I would say that this degree of collaboration is occurring at all levels between Labor, DoD, and VA.

But let me just comment on the philosophical component. I think there are two elements of preparing servicemembers for effective careers. One is employment readiness and the second is certainty. The employment readiness is how ready are they in terms of their knowledge, skills and abilities for a career.

The second is certainty. Do they know what they want to do? You can be very ready. You can have a great degree, some certifications, but you may not know how to use them. So we want to prepare them for both elements, the readiness and also the certainty.

We feel we have finally, you know, cracked the riddle on segmentation, which is pre-work predictive assessments, assessing their employment readiness and also assessing the certainty. Then creating three different elements of TAP, so each person based upon their employment readiness gets a basic suite of knowledge, information, and training. And then they can decide how much further they want to go. And that online virtual resource we spoke about and the after TAP support will allow them to have further customization.

If they just want the basics, they can get that in the 2½ days. If they want the basics plus, or if they need refreshment on what they learned later, there is an online resource and then there is after TAP support.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Mr. Campbell, I think in your testimony—I mean, is that complementary as what Secretary Jefferson sort of again—philosophically if you were—is that complementary to the point you made about we need a modern, innovative lifestyle approach that starts at the beginning of service? So that by the time we get to these components the servicemember is familiar with them, they kind of know better how to utilize them versus where the mindset is once there is a decision to separate.

Mr. CAMPBELL. Yes, ma'am. I just met Assistant Secretary Jefferson before the hearing, so we did not have a chance to compare notes. But our philosophy is similar. We believe that TAP should really start early on in the servicemember's career so it is not a rush at the end to fill them with as much information as you can so that he or she can check the box.

It really is incumbent on us to have a program that educates them all along the way, so they can make informed decisions as they go through their career. And we think that is important, because at the end of the day we want these servicemembers, when they decide to leave the service, they remember the military as

being really a very terrific place to work, because they got the training, the education, and they really brought them along and showed them exactly what the future may look like so they could make informed decisions. And they will be a great referral source for the military.

Mr. HORNE. And, Madam Chairperson, if I could add to that statement.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Yes.

Mr. HORNE. Based on your question, Congress was very brilliant when you look at the construct of the TAP program in chapter 58 of title 10, especially section 1142.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. We will quote you on that. We haven't been called brilliant.

Mr. HORNE. I am sorry. I did it so often. But the layout of the pre-separation counseling really embodies the core curriculum standardized pieces of TAP as an overview. And in the wisdom of the statute and in our policy, you also added there should be an individual transition plan that should be unique to the individual servicemember.

We agree with you. There should be some basic information from DOL, VA, both on the benefit side and the disabled veteran side. But once that core of what we call classroom or curriculum information is passed on to the servicemember, then they should move in. And this is where we need to wrap it up to a more robust, individualized transition plan that is unique to that one individual.

If I may share with you very quickly that in fiscal year 2009, after 179,000 plus a few hundred servicemembers retired and left active duty. During that same fiscal year, which is sort of like 179,000 people sitting in seats, we had over 1.28 million individual demands for individual one-on-one services.

So although it might not appear from some of those who may be falling through the cracks, there is a huge individual demand for the one-on-one assistance. And it is being provided every day by DOL, VA, and DoD.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Do you feel that there are adequate career counselors across all three agencies to meet the magnitude of that demand?

Mr. HORNE. May we take that for the record?

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Yes.

[The DoD subsequently provided the following information:]

The DoD-DOL Credentialing Working Group will conduct a comprehensive review and analysis of the various resources currently providing licensure and certification counseling/coaching services within various DoD programs such as by Command Career Counselors, education services officers, Voluntary Education or TAP to determine if sufficient resources are in place to provide the counseling and coaching required. We will be able to answer this question once the results of the review, which is expected to be completed no later than September 30, 2011, are analyzed.

**Question:** Is this service separate from TAP?

Licensure and certification counseling/coaching is a service separate from TAP for all the Military Services.

Mr. JEFFERSON. We can always use more.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Careful, Mr. Secretary. Ms. Cocker, do you have any final comments?

Ms. COCKER. Yes, ma'am. And like the TAP program, the Disabled Transition Assistance Program, DTAP, we are currently in the process of looking at revising, and modernizing it; and trying to look at it from the perspective of what is it that our servicemembers today really need.

We are considering what mediums we will use, instead of using just using the basic PowerPoint lecture method. Really looking at attention spans and what is going to capture their interests, so that they get the information in a way that they will really be able to absorb it. Because we recognize that not every servicemember is ready to hear the message that we have for them, and really absorb it, and take it to the next level, which is to pursue the benefit.

So in addition to revamping DTAP, we also are continuing to increase our outreach efforts post-separation. But DTAP is being revamped. And we are currently in that process. And we are collaborating with our partners, DoD and DOL in that also.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Thank you. Just one final question, Mr. Campbell. Should TAP be mandatory for all military branches to help separating servicemembers capitalize on their training and experience?

Mr. CAMPBELL. At the moment—at the present time the TAP is mandatory for the Marine Corps. The Navy it is mandatory unless the sailor opts out of the program.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. So the Navy has an opt-out program.

Mr. CAMPBELL. Has opt out, right. And the Army all components of TAP are mandatory for any soldier referred to a medical or physical evaluation board and any soldier assigned to a warrior transition unit. That is what we have now.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. In your opinion, do you think that the other branches should adopt the Marine Corps position?

Mr. HORNE. Madam Chairman, we are evaluating that policy right now. The Joint Executive Council have had two meetings on this issue. Mr. Jefferson will be appearing before the Council this coming September the 10th. Mandatory TAP is being looked at by Deputy Secretary Gould and Deputy Secretary Lynn.

We will like to come back to the Committee with a written response if you give us it for the record, because the senior leadership is looking at that issue, realizing we have to weigh any mandatory policy with mission, OPS Tempo, those kinds of things from the commander's perspective.

But we are looking at it. It is a very difficult issue. But we know we must do what is in the best interests of our servicemembers and their families at the end of the day.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. I appreciate and understand your response. I would just say for the record that Operations Tempo for the Marine Corps is probably here. The position they have taken on mandatory TAP is here. You can look at even as you described where the other branches are as it relates to mandatory TAP, everyone's been carrying a load here as it relates to combat tempo and operations tempo clearly.

But I think we are all aware of what OIF and OEF have meant to the United States Marine Corps. We also understand that in the time of very tight Federal budgets, that there is a resource issue here.

But we also recognize that this should be a priority. The state of the economy, and what these men and women have given to the country, and making their transition as smooth as possible should be a priority.

I understand that you are evaluating it in part, because you are looking at it in tandem for improving the quality of the program. Because I can understand the reluctance perhaps of some of the other branches given even the mixed opinions of TAP as it currently exists from some of my constituents who have been through it. If you make something mandatory, that some members are going to find not useful, if you are going to make it mandatory, you want it to be of the highest utility in making that transition.

I am glad to know that it is part of what is being evaluated in tandem with what I think is sort of the outstanding work and clear commitment of the Department of Labor to try to figure out a way to reform this program. Clearly, Mr. Campbell, your testimony of the need to, again, make it more modern, make it more innovative, start it earlier, maximize the utility, and hopefully thereby, you know, get the best return on the investment that we make, particularly if there is a decision which I think—I think we should make it mandatory. I think that is pretty clear what my position has been.

But I thank you all.

Mr. JEFFERSON. Madam Chairwoman.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Yes.

Mr. JEFFERSON. Would it be possible to just make two quick comments?

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Yes.

Mr. JEFFERSON. First, I want to acknowledge the outstanding collaboration that has been taking place between DoD, VA, and Labor on this notion of transforming TAP and the fact that we are working with the Deputy Secretary's of Defense and VA on September 10th on this issue of mandatory TAP. I think it is a very important and serious step forward. I just want to acknowledge and welcome John to that community. And it is his first week.

Secondly, our last hearing we did speak about the high unemployment for those veterans 23, 24 years old. And the fact that there are 50,000 of them. And we wanted to create an initiative. We do now have that Job Corps initiative. And the Department of Labor would be extremely appreciative of any assistance that your staffs could provide to help us raise awareness of this very timely program. We are signing up to 300 veterans right now with other Members of Congress. The slots are there. If there are veterans in need, if you could help us raise awareness of that, we would be extremely appreciative.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. I will speak with Mr. Boozman and certainly our respective counsel and staff to brainstorm how we can be most helpful to your efforts.

Mr. JEFFERSON. Thank you very much.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Thank you to all of your testimony this afternoon. I look forward to working with all of you, the various Departments that you are representing here today, our veteran service organizations on the topics that we have discussed, so that we can find some effective strategies and solutions going forward.



Thank you very much. Hearing stands adjourned.  
[Whereupon, at 3:20 p.m. the hearing was adjourned.]

## A P P E N D I X

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### **Prepared Statement of Hon. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin, Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity**

On March 12, 2010, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics published its finding on the status of unemployed military veterans. The report highlights that veterans between the ages 18 to 24 had an unemployment rate of 21.6 percent in 2009. While these numbers are troubling, today we have the opportunity to build upon the progress we have made on the areas of education and employment that seek to address the high unemployment rates among veterans.

This hearing seeks to build upon the feedback we received in previous hearings on licensure, certification and employment matters. During these hearings, we received testimony on the barriers encountered by veterans. Barriers such as: non-transferable Military Occupation Skills to the civilian sector; required supplemental training even though one's military career may have surpassed the requirement in some states; inadequate education benefits under Title 38; and need to augment the Transition Assistance Program.

I am glad to see we are joined by representatives from the Department of Defense which is responsible for training our men and women in uniform to meet the demands of their respective military career. I am also glad to see the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Labor who both oversee these unique benefits and programs that may help our nation's veterans gain meaningful employment after their military service.

While servicemembers and veterans all have unique career goals, it is vitally important that all Federal agencies continue to work hand-in-hand to provide the best licensing and certification assistance available to our men and women who have answered out nation's call to duty. I look forward to hearing from all of our panelists today so that we may continue to help our servicemembers and veterans.

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### **Prepared Statement of Eric A. Hilleman, Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States**

MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony at today's hearing on licensure and credentialing for America's veterans. The 2.1 million men and women of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and our Auxiliaries appreciate the voice you give them at this important hearing.

Upon leaving the military, servicemembers typically follow two tracts: an educational tract or an employment tract. A transition process that is helpful and friendly is central to having a successful transition from active duty to civilian life. Securing licensure, credentials and/or education credit in areas comparable to their military experiences is a major component to a smooth transition. The VFW has found that previous military training and experience, whether in a technical field or on the battlefield, is not widely recognized by the private sector.

When entering the military a servicemember is trained in a Military Occupational Specialty (MOS). This is often a field of interest for a servicemember and requires a concentration in a specific area within the military. Much of a veteran's post service life is shaped by the skills and training of their respective MOS. An MOS provides two distinct skill sets to veterans: highly recognized transferable skills and intangible skills. Highly recognized transferable skills include technical attributes, for example: a mechanic, nurse, or information technology specialist. The intangible skills are attributes that improve the work ability of a veteran. These skills aren't necessarily listed on a transcript or qualify the veteran for a license, for example those learned in an infantry combat role: organizational management, risk assessment, and leadership skills. Despite the highly recognized transferable skills being

more accepted by industry leaders, MOS licensure and certification programs are still scant across private industry.

#### ***Educational Credit***

The primary bridge between the military world and educational world is the American Council on Education (ACE). ACE evaluates military experience translating it into accreditation or college credit for its affiliate colleges and universities. When a servicemember leaves the military, they receive transcripts listing their training and experiences. Each service branch has their own system of tracking a servicemembers activities while in the military: AARTS (Army), SMART (Marines/Navy), CGI (Coast Guard), CCAF (Air Force). While slightly different, all transcripts list military training and coursework during service.

The Department of Defense (DoD) contracts with ACE to review military courses of study and MOS for transferable credit into institutions of higher education. ACE examines specific MOS schools for education credit, recommending the credits be placed on transcripts of servicemembers. These recommended educational equivalents are then accepted or rejected by individual schools depending on the school, the nature of credit, and the veteran's course of study. Further, ACE produces a guide, "A Transfer Guide; Understanding Your Military Transcript and ACE Credit Recommendations," which aids veterans and their educational institutions in better understanding how and what translates into college credit. According to the ACE Web site, "More than 2,300 colleges and universities recognize these ACE-endorsed transcripts as official documentation of military experiences and accurate records of applicable ACE credit recommendations." ACE evaluations make it easier for veterans to apply to school, whether those veterans have highly recognized transferable skills or intangible skills. ACE's guide can be found at: [http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ProgramsServices/MilitaryPrograms/TransferGuide\(4-6-09\).pdf](http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ProgramsServices/MilitaryPrograms/TransferGuide(4-6-09).pdf).

The number of schools accepting ACE credit varies by state. In South Dakota, for example, four colleges or universities accept full ACE recommendations, Arkansas has eleven, Nebraska has twenty-four, and Oklahoma has thirty-six. While ACE's recommendations help veterans, who would be at a serious disadvantage when applying for enrollment without ACE, many schools do not accept or recognize credits identified by ACE. Without recognized credit for military service, veterans are required to take course they may have already mastered through military service.

#### ***Employment Credit***

Finding viable employment remains one of the largest challenges facing our veterans today. Many servicemembers seek civilian licensure for their military experiences, often requiring training and/or varying levels of experience. Success in securing licensing or certification in all fields varies by geographic location, prerequisite experience, MOS, and industry.

For example, within the nursing profession, South Dakota and North Carolina accept only the Army Licensed Practical Nurse Program (MOS 68WM6) for veterans to qualify for the state nursing test. Both states only accept the Army Licensed Practical Nurse Program as a prerequisite to sit for the accreditation test. Because nursing requirements are set by state regulation, different states, as well as different schools within those states, determine any credit, if any, for prior service.

One industry of growing success for veterans is in Information Technology (IT). The Computer Technology Industry Association, or CompTIA, is a non-profit trade association advancing the global interests of information technology. Under their Educational Foundation is a program called Creating Futures, which provides free training and certification opportunities to groups such as veterans. Veterans and their spouses can qualify to receive free online training for certifications in numerous information technology certifications, such as, Linux, Security, and Server certifications. If a veteran has previous IT experience, they can qualify for higher certifications skipping over the most basic courses. The Creating Futures program is typically completed within three months and has helped hundreds of veterans receive credit and certification, regardless of their skill set.

Each industry and state determines prerequisite experience for licensing and certification. With such a high degree of variance, veterans could benefit greatly from more centralized information recourses. Ideally, industry associations would invest in and promote translating specific MOSs into recognizable industry accreditation.

#### ***Current Transition Programs***

The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) is the primary program thought of when examining transition assistance. TAP is offered to all military branches for servicemembers leaving the military. The mandatory workshop provides help with

general skills such as resume building and interviewing, and they maintain a Web site which provides numerous internet job search engines. This is a great resource; however, by itself, it is inadequate in addressing veterans' need as they transition back into civilian life. TAP, like military transcripts, are less of a guide and more of a resource. It is also important to remember that TAP is offered at the time a servicemember is transitioning out of the military; many simply want to get home and are not immediately concerned with employment and education prospects.

The VFW applauds ACE for their work and continues to support their efforts, as well as those schools that recognize ACE credit. The VFW also commends the many work sectors that recognize the value, importance, and abilities of veterans. Still, many educational institutions, as well as employers, have a difficult time understanding a veterans work abilities. We believe that this comes as a result of an inability to interpret, evaluate, and analyze a servicemembers past training and experiences.

The VFW encourages all efforts to increase awareness of ACE among military members as well as educational institutions and employers in order to award veterans their due credit and recognize their many job attributes. The VFW also supports efforts to reach out to independent licensure and certification agencies within various work sectors on behalf of veterans. We must remember that all veterans, no matter their experience, understand the principles employers value as the foundation for success: discipline, dedication, and goal orientation.

#### ***Reconditions***

The VFW recommends two broad scope studies, one on education credits and one on industry accreditation, to examine what and how military experience transfer into the private sector. When each study determines what is currently taking place across all branches of service and all MOSs, then recommendations can be made to expand successful programs. These programs can be then incorporated into the National Recourse Directory available through the TAP program.

To examine and expand the current cooperation between the DoD and the American Council on Education, we would recommend Congress fund a complete study of every MOS across all branches of service. While not every MOS will have clear transferable credit, schools and veterans alike benefit from a comprehensive process resulting in clearly defined military-educational equivalencies. The 2,300 schools that accept military credits through ACE will have an expanded list of reviewed military credits and millions of veterans will have a detailed list of directly transferable military credit.

The VFW also recommends a licensure and credentialing study to identify MOSs and their applicability in civilian employment in order to best gauge how to approach veteran employment. By examining direct skills and how they can be applied via state-by-state regulations, we could begin to see some standardization within industries. Through this study we would like to see the high variance of accepted military skills evolve into widely accepted accreditation specific to each MOS and apply those toward current industry practices.

These suggestions, ideas and recommendations will not, in and of themselves, solve the educational and employment problems facing our nation's veterans today. We encourage Congress to consider these initiatives and programs. We believe the cumulative effect of a comprehensive study will help to achieve improvements in education and job quality for veterans and their families.

We appreciate the opportunity to present our views to you today and we welcome any questions you may have.

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#### **Prepared Statement of Joseph C. Sharpe, Jr., Director National Economic Commission, The American Legion**

Madam Chairwoman, Ranking Member Boozman and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to submit the views of The American Legion regarding "Licensure and Credentialing."

The American Legion asserts that veterans have been trained, educated, disciplined, and molded by the greatest military in the world, and yet a large number of these skills are deemed non-applicable in the civilian sector. The American Legion understands that veterans have attributes to make them extremely productive in the civilian sector. These attributes include an accelerated learning curve, leadership, teamwork, diversity and inclusion in action, efficient performance under pressure, respect for procedures, technology and globalization, integrity, conscientiousness of health and safety standards, and the ability to triumph over adversity.

With all of these abilities, a casual observer would assume that veterans are easily employed and can transition their military experience to the private sector with ease. Unfortunately, that is not the case.

There are several problems that exist for servicemembers translating their skills to the private sector: servicemembers might not know the credentialing requirements of their military specialty; credentialing boards are unaware of the comparability of military education, training and experience to the civilian sector or do not recognize military specific-training education, training and experience. The solution to this problem is through proper information dissemination by military leaders on civilian licensing and certifications, along with developing marketing campaigns to make civilian credentialing boards aware of transferable military skills and the quality of military education, training and experience. Another suggestion is that credentialing agencies could develop military-specific credential requirements that recognize equivalent military training. Some universities and colleges take note of military training and grant college credits to veterans based on the amount of training they underwent. This could apply to credentialing as well.

Another barrier is the cost of training to fill the disparities between military training and civilian training. In order to fill these gaps, servicemembers should have constant access to financial and training resources while they are still serving. Another means to filling this gap is by allowing vocational training to be accessed using the Post-9/11 GI Bill. The current law only allows Post-9/11 GI Bill recipients to attend classes at degree granting institutions. The American Legion's position is to allow vocational, apprenticeship, flight training and on-the-job training programs be included in the Post-9/11 GI Bill. The Servicemen's Readjustment Act 1944 allowed for vocational training with a significant amount of veterans taking advantage of this benefit. The men and women who served in harm's way should be entitled to a benefit that fits their personal needs.

#### **MILITARY TRAINING**

The Department of Defense (DoD) provides some of the best vocational training in the nation for its military personnel and establishes, measures and evaluates performance standards for every occupation with the armed forces. There are many occupational career fields in the armed forces that can easily translate to a civilian counterpart; additionally, there are many occupations in the civilian workforce that require a license or certification.

In the armed forces, these unique occupations are performed to approved military standards that may meet or exceed the civilian license or certification criteria. Upon separation, however, many servicemembers, certified as proficient in their military occupational career, are not licensed or certified to perform the comparable job in the civilian workforce, thus hindering chances for immediate civilian employment and delaying career advancement. This situation creates an artificial barrier to employment upon separation from military service. Military Occupation Specialties (MOS) or ratings such as motor transport, corpsman or medic, need to undergo additional training, once out of the service, to work in their career path. This process slows down the veteran in obtaining gainful employment.

A study by the Presidential Commission on Servicemembers' and Veterans' Transition Assistance identified a total of 105 military professions where civilian credentialing is required.

#### **MILITARY TRANSCRIPTS**

Military transcripts provided from each of the Armed Forces provide a very limited training and education record and at times incorrect, missing, or additional information is listed. The Army Training Requirements and Resource System (ATTRS), Navy's Sailor Marine American Council of Education (ACE) Registry Transcript (SMART), and the Air Force Institute of Advanced Distributed Learning (AFIADL) are all accepted by the American Council on Education.

For example, National Guardsman and Reservists, many of them infantry, have enormous talents, skills, and attributes that they have used while in theater. However, because the tasks they performed are so unique and difficult to succinctly describe, they are left with an empty shell of a resume.

When transitioning from military to civilian careers, many servicemembers can only list 11 B, Infantryman. It would be more advantageous if they can write 11 B, Infantryman, chief advisor to Mayor of Iraqi town, facilitator of incubator maintenance at local hospital, and more specified individual tasks. These OIF/OEF veterans have performed duties that could fall in line with many civilian professions. If a system could be devised to translate the full nature of a service Member's skills and abilities, as opposed to only listing a military occupation code, individual veterans would be positively affected.

### ONLINE ASSISTANCE

There are so many Web sites for servicemembers and veterans to visit that it can become extremely confusing and complex. The Army and Navy COOL (Credentialing Opportunities Online) Web sites are excellent tools for potential recruits, current servicemembers, and transitioning veterans to use. The Air Force Personnel Center is also a useful tool. The Career One Stop and the Operational Information Network Online, or O\*Net, both operated by the Department of Labor, are more helpful tools.

These sites should be made easily accessible at all recruitment and transitioning stations. However, for those individuals who are constrained for time, have limited web access, are deployed overseas, and those with poor internet savvy, these Web sites are just not enough. The American Legion recommends more access of licensing and credentialing services at TAP sites.

### ACCESS AT TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FACILITIES

The American Legion observes that transition assistance modules are excellent avenues for each individual U.S. state to access transitioning servicemembers. The American Legion supports mandatory TAP for transition servicemembers at least 180 days prior to the end of their contractual obligation. When servicemembers are at these TAP sites around the country, each state workforce agency or credentialing board can provide important information.

Better coordination, communication and interaction of credentialing boards and the training commands of each of our Nation's armed forces are needed. Furthermore, military trainers, doctrine writers, and evaluation tests for military skills should coordinate with their civilian counterparts and attempt to synchronize military tests with their civilian counterparts.

The majority of the onus and responsibility is on the veteran to contact authorization boards to ascertain what they will require to be successful in the profession that they choose. However, these boards should have two-way communication so that the onus is not completely on the veteran, especially in a time of war when they are focusing on their immediate tasks.

The Council of Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation has a database of national approving boards. Listed below are selected Members of this national database. Each TAP site should coordinate with at least the following boards to have a representative participate. Additionally, each U.S. state regulatory board should also coordinate with TAP personnel and brief on transitioning servicemembers the unique relevant requirements needed for certification.

- National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA)
- National Council for Architecture Registration Boards (NCARB)
- The Federation of Chiropractic Licensing Boards (FCLB)
- National Association of State Contractor Licensing Agencies (NASCLA)
- American Association of State Counseling Boards (AASCB)
- National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE)
- National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying
- International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards
- National Association of Insurance Commissioners
- Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards
- National Association of Boards of Examiners of Long Term Care Administrators
- Association of Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Boards
- The Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB)
- National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN)
- Association of Regulatory Boards of Optometry (ARBO)
- National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP)
- The Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT)
- Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards
- The Association of Real Estate License Law Officials (ARELLO)
- Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB)
- American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB)

Web sites and online interaction are great tools but nothing can replace personal interaction. Personal visits by representatives of national and state boards at TAP sites and training commands can assist the transfer of military licensing and certification. At a minimum, these boards can provide a pamphlet or information sheet to put into a veteran's hand.

## CONCLUSION

With over 2 million servicemembers having served in Iraq or Afghanistan, TAP and other transition programs need to be modernized to give relevant guidance and training to all transitioning servicemembers and their families. The American Legion supports efforts to eliminate employment barriers that impede the transfer of military job skills to the civilian labor market. We also support efforts that require DOD take appropriate steps to ensure that servicemembers be trained, tested, evaluated and issued any licensure or certification that may be required in the civilian workforce prior to separation. The American Legion supports efforts to increase the civilian labor market's acceptance of the occupational training provided by the military.

There have been estimates that approximately 60 percent of the workforce will retire by 2020 and competent, educated, and capable individuals must replace the workforce in order to assure the United States retains its competitive edge in the world. The veterans of this nation make up a well-qualified disciplined pool of applicants. Increasing recognition of military training by integrating licensing and credentialing must be strengthened to assist our country's finest to achieve their professional goals.

Again, thank you Madam Chairwoman, Ranking Member Boozman and distinguished members of the Committee for allowing The American Legion to present our views on this very important matter.

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### Prepared Statement of Thomas Zampieri, Ph.D., Director of Government Relations, Blinded Veterans Association

## INTRODUCTION

Chairwoman Herseth Sandlin and Ranking Member Boozman and members of the House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity on behalf of the Blinded Veterans Association (BVA), we thank you for this opportunity to present our testimony today regarding Licensure and Certification of Transitioning Veterans. As you know the unemployment rate for our returning veterans today is terrible and anything we can do to address this issue is critical because unemployment causes economic as well as additional psycho-social stress for not only the veteran but their families. BVA is celebrating 65 years of service and is the only Veterans Service Organization (VSO) exclusively dedicated to serving the needs of our Nation's blinded veterans and their families.

BVA has joined with the other VSOs in making recommendations today to improve the unemployment numbers for our veterans which now exceed the national rate 14 percent and even higher for some reserve and National Guard members. We would urge those who are disturbed by those general unemployment numbers to please consider the rate of unemployment for disabled working age population (18-64) with sensory loss in America is 45 percent and they also face more challenges in this time of economic instability. Improving VA Vocational Rehabilitation Chapter 31 subsistence allowance and ensuring that the new Post-9/11 GI bill covers as many types of educational programs as possible is vital in improving this employment picture for veterans. Along with this must be the ability to transition military skills into civilian jobs by obtaining college credit hours for the Military Occupational Skill (MOS) education they receive often over years of their service to our nation.

With any veteran today the "pileup of unemployment" in the current economy is worse when one reviews recent article describing how the bottom fell out for the job market for the most recent college graduating class of 2009. The Collegiate Employment Research Institute at Michigan State University, which tracks trends in employment of new college graduates nationwide found last spring large employer companies hired 42 percent fewer graduates than they had originally targeted when the school year started in 2008. In 2009 the unemployment rate for four year degree graduates stood at 8.8 percent double what it was in 2006. Veterans returning from the wars are competing in the age group of 21-to-24 year old college graduates who are unemployed and then adding to this mixture is the older experienced workers, who have been laid off searching for even entry level jobs, they often have advanced

degrees with previous senior experience worsening this overall situation more slowing down the normal escalator of career progression.<sup>1</sup>

### **SERVICEMEMBERS OCCUPATIONAL CONVERSION AND TRAINING**

As the VA Committee examines the entire issue of returning servicemembers with military skills that are not easily converted into civilian employment. Congress might consider restarting a program similar to the Servicemembers Occupational Conversion and Training, (SMOCTA) program. Instead of being funded by the Department of Defense as in the old program we recommend it should be administered by the VA and the DOL. This was considered one of the better programs to serve transitioning military personnel in 1990's that have limited transferable military occupational skills MOS that do not correlate with civilian positions. SMOCTA also would assist those Reserve and Army National Guard members reentering the workforce following deployments.

### **MILITARY MEDICS AND CORPSMEN TRANSITIONING**

According to the Veterans of Foreign Wars more than 1,300 Army medics have served in Afghanistan, and more than 8,000 have served in Iraq, based on the number of Combat Medical Badges awarded. More than 97 percent today of soldiers who are wounded are being saved (compared with 80 percent in Vietnam) and many credit the advanced emergency medical training of medics and corpsmen for this front line improvement in survival rates.<sup>5</sup> If these skilled medics and corpsmen can provide primary and emergency care in a combat zone, they can be a huge benefit in rural and remote areas here at home—provided they are given the chance to do so with complementary civilian college PA education. Today PAs are well established in the civilian, military, and other federal health care systems, but barriers in the academic community prevent experienced medics and corpsmen from ever entering PA college program despite the fact they have on average 704 hours of initial medical training and for Special Forces Medical Skills (SFMS) training is 48 weeks in length.

On April 15 2010, this Subcommittee and on May 25, 2010 before the VA Committee Round Table discussion on employment issues the VSO witnesses cited the same problem of returning highly experience combat Army medics, Navy corpsmen, Air Force paramedics not being able to find jobs that accepted the high level of military advanced medical training and emergency medical care experience they had obtained. BVA along with the other VSO's would recommend that the VA Subcommittee include legislation this session for pilot "Veteran Medic/Corpsman Transition to PA Program" that would provide funding assistance in the form of VA Transition educational grants to accredited Physician Assistant Programs that provide the veteran student with these medical skills the additional college education necessary for certification and licensure. Grants would help the pilot college programs in doing individual transcript assessments, educational academic course counseling, develop training plans, and supportive services for the veteran applicant. I would point out that in the late 1960's and into 1970's when thousands of returning Vietnam combat medics and corpsmen were strongly encouraged to attend PA programs because of their emergency medical life saver skills this was highly successful. The Department of Labor has listed the physician assistant occupation in the top ten occupations for career growth in next decade and the demand for rural health care providers is growing.

### **FROM SOLDIER TO STUDENT BRIDGING THE GAPS of TRANSITION**

In a ground breaking educational survey of academic colleges and universities report July 2009 "From Soldier to Student Bridging the Gap of Transition of Servicemembers on Campus" the American Council on Education (ACE) working with Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SMOC) and American Association State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) examined the current state of veterans transitioning into academic programs. While more than half of those who responded to surveys (57 percent) offer programs and services specifically designed for veterans, these were in the Office of Financial Aid offering information on loans, discounts for veterans, and college aid for veterans. Only (49 percent) offered office for employment services and even fewer (48 percent) offered veterans an office for academic advising. Significantly fewer 33 percent offered programs or services specifi-

<sup>1</sup>The Next Economy "Children of Great Recession" Ronald Brownstein Summer 2010 pages 5-6.



cally designed to assist veterans with physical disabilities and less visible disabilities such as Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and 23 percent had staffed trained to assist veterans with these conditions respectively.<sup>2</sup> While many colleges surveyed have plans to increase the programs for veterans on campuses that leaves gaps for those trying to enter colleges today.

Focus groups of veterans highlighted that more academic counseling services to analyze and award credit for military training and occupational skills is necessary. While the AARTS/SMART Programs provide active duty personnel or veterans of the Army (AARTS) or Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps (SMART) with an official transcript of military training or courses evaluated by American Counsel Education (ACE) and 2,300 public colleges do recognize these ACE endorsed transcripts as official documentation of military training, the student veteran must still find the academic counselor who will match the courses to admission and degree requirements which is lacking on many campuses.<sup>3</sup> The American Association Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Office (AACRAO), along with Council For Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and ACE developed and published a joint statement on the issue of “transfer and Award of Academic credit. It is important because it highlights that in the world of changing academic programs, with growing on-line degree programs, and institutions offering distant learning credits, that it is still up to the individual academic institution to consider inter-institutional transfers of credit involving these considerations: (1) The educational quality of the learning; (2) the comparability of the nature, content, and level of the learning experience to that offered by the receiving institution; and (3) The appropriateness and applicability of the learning experience to the programs offered by the receiving institution in light of the student’s educational goals.

In questioning former military medics and corpsmen, they also pointed to these Web sites where military occupational skill (MOS) courses can be translated into credits for courses completed. The use Navy College.com and the American Council of Education (ACE): <http://www.acenet.edu/AM/Template.cfm?Section=MilitaryPrograms>.

Which uses this site for colleges to evaluate course taken in the military: <http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ProgramsServices/MilitaryPrograms/ResourcesCollegeUniv.htm>. However, former corpsmen point to the difficulty of having academic institutions accept that the Navy medical corpsmen may attend variety MOS medical skill schools ranging from the basic A school “Navy Hospital Corpsmen School” and then other senior enlisted B and C schools that focus on more advanced medical skills training from everything from Operating Room, Aviation, Special Operations Warfare, Diving, Tropical Medicine, with each adding higher levels of skill training and experience. Part of this complex struggle is not just translating the military courses into college credits but finding academic counselors who will individually assist the veteran with proper academic placement within any civilian college degree program.

## VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

In FY 2009, VR&E was authorized 1,105 FTEs. As endorser with IBVSOs BVA is concerned members of the committee when informed that this number has been “frozen” due to the unknown impact the implementation of chapter 33 benefits will have on the VR&E program. Last year, VSOIB recommended that total staffing be increased to manage the current and anticipated workload as stated in the Secretary’s VR&E Task Force. VA currently has approximately 106,000 enrollees in Chapter 31. The IBVSOs believe that a ratio of 1:96 (which includes administrative support) is inadequate to provide the level of counseling and support that our wounded and disabled veterans need to achieve success in their employment goals. BVA supports the recommendation of the IBVSOs that Congress should authorize 1,375 total FTEs for the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service for FY 2010. The Chapter 31 VR subsistence and housing allowance must be increased to allow service connected disabled veterans the ability to meet the additional costs of attending school.

## CONCLUSIONS

Madam Chair and members of this subcommittee, BVA would appreciate inclusion of the following issues in your list of changes as you move forward to improve

<sup>2</sup>From Soldier to Student Bridging the Gap of Transition of Servicemembers on Campus July 2009 ACE page iii.

<sup>3</sup>From Solider to Student Bridging the Gap of Transition July 2009 Page 23.

the employment situation for our veterans. Our military servicemembers since 2001 have repeatedly sacrificed for their country and while congress is trying to create higher employment for our citizens our veterans should be given special consideration and additional educational assistance. BVA again appreciated the chance to provide this testimony and will answer any questions you might have now.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Disabled veterans must experience a real seamless transition from the DoD to the VA disability Vocational benefits program with adequate staffing to meet the needs of this growing population of service connected veterans. It requires that the continuum of health care and VA benefits processing be done efficiently—through a special office of compliance if necessary between DoD and VA.
2. Recommend pilot educational assistance grant program for five years for Physician Assistant Programs to assist returning veterans with medical skills into the programs with grants as Military Pathways Demonstration Programs. These grants to accredited physician assistant colleges would assist transitioning military medical personnel to build upon occupational military medical skills in military jobs to enter the growing demand for physician assistant workforce.
3. BVA supports the recommendation of the IBVSOs that Congress should authorize 1,375 total FTEs for the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service for FY 2010. The Chapter 31 VR subsistence and housing allowance must be increased to allow service connected disabled veterans the ability to meet the additional costs of attending school.

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**Prepared Statement of Master Chief Petty Officer  
Vince Patton, III, USCG (Ret.), Ed.D., Director, Community  
Outreach, Military.com/Monster Worldwide**

**Executive Summary:**

1. **Purpose:** What *Military.com* is doing to assist servicemembers in transferring their military training and experience to the civilian sector as they seek employment opportunities.
2. **Overview of *Military.com*:**
  - a. Created in 1999 as a private company focusing on providing news, information on military and government benefits, career services, educational opportunities targeted to the military community. Membership is free to anyone who has an interest and affinity to the military community.
  - b. *Military.com* is the largest military and veteran organization with over 10 million Members; it is also the ninth largest news destination site on the Internet.
3. ***Military.com's view on transition assistance:***
  - a. 'TAP' provides a large amount of information to transitioning servicemembers in a short period of time. Veterans often view their TAP experience as overwhelming and sometimes incomprehensible because of the volume of information covered.
  - b. With over 250,000 servicemembers transitioning annually, it is next to impossible to deliver an effective 'one size fits all' transition program. Technology, particularly personalized, comprehensive online access, is part of the solution in supporting and assisting and effective transition process.
4. ***Military.com's Career Transition Center tools:***
  - a. Veteran Career Center provides a variety of interactive tools and resources, which includes a 'military-friendly employer' job board, personalized email alerts, resume writing tools, education and training information and mentoring.
  - b. Veteran Career Network consists of over one million Military.com members who have volunteered to support transitioning servicemembers as mentors.
  - c. Military Skills Translator offers veterans a unique online tool using the O\*Net Occupational Data from the Department of Labor coupled with equiv-

alent jobs currently posted on the Monster.com job board to help in translating military experience to civilian occupation.

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Madam Chairwoman, Ranking Member Boozman, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to appear before you today to discuss issues associated with veterans employment. Today I will discuss what *Military.com* is doing to assist servicemembers in transferring their military training and experience to the civilian sector as they seek employment opportunities.

Over the course of my 30 year career in the U.S. Coast Guard, I regularly assisted Members with their transition to civilian life. This experience combined with my current position as *Military.com*'s director of community outreach has given me insights into the unique challenges our veterans face during the transition to civilian status, particularly when it comes to explaining their knowledge, skills and abilities for civilian employment opportunities.

In your invitation, you noted that there is a strong consensus in the veteran community that more needs to be done to help servicemembers transition their Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) to the civilian sector.

*Military.com* was founded in 1999 by a young Navy reservist to revolutionize the way our 30 million Americans with military affinity stay connected and informed. Today, *Military.com* is the largest military and veteran Membership organization with more than 10 million Members and we're the ninth largest news destination site on the Internet. Our free membership connects servicemembers, military families and veterans to each other and to all the benefits of service at all stages in their lives—government benefits, resources and career services, education information and scholarships, discounts, news and discussion forums to share the great stories and challenges inherent in military life, and more.

In 2004, *Military.com* joined forces with Monster Worldwide to accelerate our growth and change the playing field for career and educational opportunities for active duty personnel, as well as Guard and reservists, veterans and military spouses. Monster's vision is bringing people together to advance their lives. This partnership reinforces *Military.com*'s "members first" ethos and mission.

I can say from personal experience that one of the most important stages in the life of a servicemember is their transition out of uniform and into the civilian sector. Throughout my career, from boot camp until retirement, I was reminded of the high value of the skills, knowledge and abilities I was accumulating while in uniform. I, like many of my fellow servicemembers, took advantage of continuing education opportunities, as well as additional responsibilities that required extensive training. We were motivated to do this in large part because we understood that our military skills and experiences were highly valued and transferable to private sector jobs.

Before an active duty members transitions to civilian status, they are required to participate in the government's Transition Assistance Program (TAP) which, among many other subjects, addresses career transition. Before leaving the service I experienced firsthand its strengths and weaknesses. I believe many veterans who participated in TAP would agree that its format simply didn't deliver what we needed. The large amount of information presented over such a short period of time was overwhelming and to a large extent, incomprehensible. This continues to be true today for this generation of veterans, particularly when it comes to careers and employment.

With over 250,000 servicemembers transitioning annually, many after multiple operational deployments, it is next to impossible to deliver an effective 'one size fits all' transition program. There are so many end-of-service processing activities that occur in the course of the final three to 6 months prior to separation which require a servicemember's immediate attention, not the least of which is finding a job. While it may have been an effective approach years ago, the current program is simply not serving our men and women in uniform as it suggests that there is a simple, single event to address such a complex and challenging stage in our lives.

This leads to the question of what should the government do to ensure that military members are adequately prepared for civilian life, particularly employment in the private sector? *Military.com* believes it has to be a high tech and high touch approach, one which leverages technology and relationships. In this day and age of instant communication, the Internet is a daily resource for information gathering and communication. Veterans today, especially those who have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, are technologically savvy and gravitate to using online resources. Clearly technology, particularly personalized, comprehensive online access, is part of the solution in supporting and assisting an effective transition process.

Recognizing this, *Military.com's* Veteran Career Center uses technology to successfully deliver a personalized experience with a variety of interactive tools and resources. We offer the largest veteran job board in the world featuring military-friendly employers as well as hundreds of thousands of job postings available through our Monster.com database. We also offer personalized email alerts for new postings that match a veteran's resume and job interests, as well as resume writing tools, education and training information, mentoring through our Veteran Career Network and electronic newsletters with news and employer information.

To help veterans begin their new career search, we developed our Military Skills Translator.

We use Department of Labor's online resource known as 'O\*Net Occupational Data' as a baseline to translate current and older MOS codes into civilian occupations. Then *Military.com* takes it one step further: we present the veteran with equivalent jobs currently posted on the Monster job board, including those posted by thousands of military employers specifically looking for veterans. The veteran can immediately apply to one of these jobs from our site, or review the job postings and learn what specific experiences, skills, education and training employers are seeking for this type of position. This information can help the job seeker better 'civilianize' their military experience on their resume and best communicate the skills, knowledge and abilities they acquired while in service.

Through the Military Skills Translator, not only are veterans empowered to apply to currently available jobs, they can also see Members of *Military.com's* Veteran Career Network who have indicated they held that same MOS. One of our fastest growing services, still in "Beta" form, is the Veteran Career Network, a mentor network that connects veterans seeking new careers with employed veterans as well as military supporters. *Military.com* members who volunteer for this feature create a profile containing details about their military service, professional interests, and their current job position and employer. Veterans using this feature can find a career network mentor by company, government agency, career field, industry or geographic location. Once the veteran job seeker has identified someone with whom they would like to network, he or she can contact a mentor directly and securely using our *Military.com* email tool.

Since the implementation of our Veteran Career Network in 2007, over one million *Military.com* members have signed up to network with other veterans and help transitioning servicemembers jump start their civilian careers. We find that veterans across generations are willing to connect with each other out of a basic affinity for their shared military experience, whether the same service, unit or command assignment, rank or MOS, for example. Our Veteran Career Network is another example of how *Military.com* leverages veterans' needs and community affinity with technology to deliver a powerful, meaningful online experience to accelerate employment opportunities.

*Military.com's* success over the past 10 years is also attributable to the strength of our partnerships with the private and public sectors, both "online" and "offline." For example, we partner with the Noncommissioned Officers Association to host more than 30 veteran career fairs annually on or near military installations around the country. We have tremendous participation from military-friendly employers who come ready to hire as well as organizations like 'Helmets to Hardhats,' which focuses on hiring veterans for the building and construction trade occupations, and 'Troops to Teachers,' which advocates the teaching profession as a second career for veterans. The American Legion also attends our career fairs to assist veteran job seekers with important details about their benefits and state veteran service offices frequently attend our events to ensure job seeking veterans are aware of all of the Veterans Administration resources available to them locally.

Again, I would like to thank the Subcommittee for the opportunity to present this testimony and share what *Military.com* is doing to make a positive impact on veteran employment. I'm pleased that Congress is placing such a high priority on reforming TAP and that leadership in the Departments of Labor, Veterans Affairs and Defense are equally committed to delivering a responsive, innovative 21st Century solution to our transitioning servicemembers. We appreciate the efforts of this Subcommittee to address the critical employment issues that veterans face and look forward to working with you, our Federal agencies, employers and other stakeholders to make meaningful changes.

Madam Chairwoman and Members of the Subcommittee, this concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.



**Prepared Statement of Hon. Raymond M. Jefferson, Assistant Secretary,  
Veterans' Employment and Training Service, U.S. Department of Labor**

The Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) proudly serves Veterans and transitioning servicemembers by providing resources and expertise to assist and prepare them to obtain meaningful careers, maximize their employment opportunities and protect their employment rights.

VETS understands the need to provide a clear pathway for Veterans to transfer the significant experience they gain in the military toward good jobs in the civilian economy. Our nation needs an increasingly skilled workforce and the Department of Labor recognizes that the skills obtained during an individual's military service can meet or exceed the requirements of the civilian workforce.

The Department of Labor and VETS are facilitating this through innovative programs and collaborative engagement with public, private and nonprofit sector organizations that can accelerate the licensing and certification of our nation's Veterans.

- Redesign of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Employment Workshop *with a particular emphasis on accelerating separating servicemembers' transition into meaningful civilian careers* and improve the process for transitioning servicemembers looking for licensing and credentialing based on their military skills and training.
- Coordination with the Department of the Navy to support the United States Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP).
- Online assistance through O\*Net, a database of occupational requirements and worker attributes, and the Workforce Credentials Information Center, a site that provides detailed information and guidance on how a Veteran or transitioning servicemember can translate military skills and experience into credentials.
- Job Corps/VETS demonstration project that will allow 300 Veterans 20–24 years old to obtain training at no cost, leading to an industry-recognized certification or state licensure.
- Increased engagement with employers to increase the hiring of Veterans and transitioning servicemembers, since these employers oftentimes will assist in providing a new employee with the required licensing and certification to perform their work duties.
- Council on Veterans' Employment initiatives to increase the number of Veterans in the Federal workforce to leverage the considerable investment that the country has made in military training and experience.

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Chairwoman Herseth Sandlin, Ranking Member Boozman, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear as a witness before the Subcommittee and speak to you on the role of the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) in assisting transitioning servicemembers and Veterans in translating their military education and experience into licenses and certifications in the private sector.

Every day, we are reminded of the tremendous sacrifices made by our servicemembers and by their families. One way that we can honor their sacrifices is by providing them with the best possible services and programs our Nation has to offer. Secretary Solis and I believe strongly that Veterans deserve the chance to find good jobs, and VETS works closely with the Departments of Defense (DoD), Homeland Security (DHS), and Veterans Affairs (VA) to help them get there.

VETS proudly serves Veterans and transitioning servicemembers by providing resources and expertise to assist and prepare them to obtain meaningful careers, maximize their employment opportunities and protect their employment rights. We do that through four major programs that are an integral part of Secretary Solis's vision of "*Good Jobs for Everyone*."

- The Jobs for Veterans State Grants;
- The Transition Assistance Program Employment Workshops;
- The Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program; and
- The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act.

We have created five aspirations that VETS will pursue during my tenure as Assistant Secretary in order to achieve our desired outcomes:

1. Providing Veterans and transitioning servicemembers a voice in the workplace through serving as *the* national focal point for Veterans' Employment and Training.
2. Creating a path to good jobs for Veterans through increased engagement with employers, with a particular emphasis on the private sector.
3. Helping servicemembers transition seamlessly into meaningful employment and careers while emphasizing success in emerging industries such as green jobs.
4. Facilitating a return to work for Veterans and protecting vulnerable populations through boosting USERRA's impact by increasing awareness of and commitment to servicemembers' employment rights.
5. Investing in VETS' Federal team members and emphasizing continuous improvement to further develop their potential and better serve our clients. VETS' Federal staff has received training in team building, customer service and networking that will assist in serving our clients.

Today's hearing focuses much needed attention on the ability of transitioning servicemembers and Veterans to translate their military experience and education into civilian licenses and certifications. The Department appreciates the Committee's interest in this very important issue for Veterans. The topic is especially relevant for Veterans returning from Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom who need to obtain a license or certificate to pursue a career using a skill set learned in the military.

One of President Obama's promises to Veterans is to provide them with the best possible programs and services. The Federal Government is interested in finding ways to ease Veterans' transition through a nationwide licensing and certification program that encompasses many of the more popular careers, and VETS has been supporting this effort in ways that are described below. We have discovered barriers to a national approach, but are making significant efforts to address them and improve the connectivity between military and civilian careers.

Our Nation needs an increasingly skilled workforce and the Department of Labor recognizes that the skills obtained during an individual's military service can meet or exceed the requirements of the civilian workforce. However, the determination whether to require a certification or license for many professions, such as an electrician or plumber, is made by State and local governments. These requirements are often unique and can vary greatly from location to location. This prohibits the creation of a nationwide standard in many of the professional fields that we have identified.

To ensure that we can support the smooth transition of our servicemembers into civilian careers, VETS has aggressively focused on educating transitioning servicemembers about the requirements for licensing and certification and providing them with the information on how to obtain this. VETS accomplishes this by providing Veterans with information on licensing and certification programs and opportunities through the Transition Assistance Program.

#### **Transition Assistance Program**

The primary purpose of the DOL/VETS Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Employment Workshop is to provide transitioning servicemembers with a solid foundation of knowledge and tools to assist in their successful transition into the civilian workforce. We are in the process of transforming our TAP employment workshops to make them more engaging, economically relevant and immediately useful. In 2009, over 120,000 transitioning servicemembers attended these workshops.

VETS will redesign TAP in 2011 to update and improve the complete TAP Employment Workshop *with a particular emphasis on accelerating separating servicemembers' transition into meaningful civilian careers*. This redesign will encompass the entire curriculum, delivery methods, and student materials. Our goal is to create a world-class program that most effectively meets the needs of transitioning servicemembers entering the 21st century workforce.

Several aspects of the redesign will improve the process for transitioning servicemembers looking for licensing and credentialing based on their military skills and training. TAP will provide predictive assessments which include online and/or written assessment tools to appraise and provide participants with information on the following:

- Individual strengths—professional and qualitative
- Professions for which they are best suited and, based on data, have the highest chances of success

The TAP online curriculum will include a “Skills Appraisal of Transferable Skills” assessment tool; a “Signature Strengths” assessment tool; and a “Work Preferences and Work-Related Values” assessment tool. These tools will enable transitioning servicemembers to identify the appropriate certification program that meets their career goals.

Additionally, the TAP redesign will help transitioning servicemembers better understand the Verification of Military Experience and Training (VMET) document. DoD and DHS provide this document to certify job skills and experience acquired while on active duty that may apply to licensing and certification for employment in the civilian sector.

The current TAP workshop helps acquaint transitioning servicemembers with licensing and certification resources available through the government. This includes Web sites such as the Army and Navy Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL) sites ([www.cool.army.mil](http://www.cool.army.mil), [www.cool.navy.mil](http://www.cool.navy.mil)). Two Department of Labor Web sites, the Workforce Credentials Information Center and Occupational Information Network (O\*Net), provide detailed information on civilian workforce skill requirements and credentials, along with a separate section on military resources.

#### **Registered Apprenticeships**

DOL also coordinates with the Department of the Navy to support the United States Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP), which provides over 15,000 active duty Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Navy servicemembers with the opportunity to complete civilian Registered Apprenticeship requirements while they are on active duty. DOL issues a nationally recognized “Certificate of Completion” to servicemembers who complete their apprenticeship. Many state licensing boards for occupations in the building and construction industry, such as electrician and plumber, often require individuals to demonstrate completion of Registered Apprenticeship to sit for the licensing examination. Additionally, DOL facilitates veterans and transitioning servicemembers’ access to Registered Apprenticeship opportunities through coordination with the Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL-CIO’s Helmets to Hardhats (HTH) program. This program enables veterans that do not complete their USMAP apprenticeship to connect with civilian registered apprenticeship programs in the building and construction industry.

#### **DOL Web sites**

O\*Net ([www.online.onetcenter.org](http://www.online.onetcenter.org)) is a database of occupational requirements and worker attributes. It describes occupations in terms of the skills, knowledge, work tasks and activities, and other requirements. Using O\*Net OnLine, veterans and transitioning servicemembers can learn about the requirements of civilian occupations and build skill-based résumés by searching for occupations that use designated skills or by using crosswalks from military classifications or apprenticeship programs and link to other online information resources such as employment outlook and wages.

DOL also maintains the Workforce Credentials Information Center ([www.careeronestop.org/CREENTIALING/CredentialingHomeReadMore.asp](http://www.careeronestop.org/CREENTIALING/CredentialingHomeReadMore.asp)). This site provides detailed information and guidance on how a Veteran or transitioning servicemember can translate military skills and experience into credentials. This includes a Certification Finder and Licensed Occupations database, which can be searched by occupation, industry, or keyword; licenses can also be searched by state or Federal agency.

#### **Collaboration with Job Corps**

VETS recognizes that leveraging and improving existing programs does not go far enough in facilitating the transition to civilian credentials and licensing programs. VETS and the Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration’s (ETA) Office of Job Corps launched a demonstration project last month that will allow Veterans 20–24 years old to obtain training at no cost, leading to an industry-recognized certification or state licensure, assistance with job placement, and up to 21 months of support for program graduates.

VETS and ETA Job Corps will participate in a demonstration project to allow eligible Veterans to participate in Job Corps at three selected Job Corps sites. VETS TAP facilitators and Job Corps counselors will conduct outreach sessions with TAP participants to promote participation. Once a participant has been identified and accepted into the program, he/she will be given the opportunity to select one of the three Job Corps training centers. A Veteran will be advised that he or she may attend other Job Corps centers, but such participation will be outside the scope of the demonstration project.

The demonstration project will accommodate up to 300 transitioning servicemembers who require employment and training services to help them transition from the military to the civilian workforce. While Job Corps has set aside 300 slots for the demonstration project, the actual participation during the year may exceed that number due to Job Corps' model of continuous enrollment.

The demonstration project is specifically designed to provide unique skill and education training in a variety of trades and professions that is appropriate for Veterans who have developed many of these skills during their time in the military. The Job Corps program is self-paced and some Veterans will be able to accelerate through tracks based on their experience, knowledge, skills, and abilities. Many of these training tracks will prepare participants for careers in the renewable energy and energy efficiency industries. Upon graduation, the Veteran may earn an industry-recognized certification and begin the 21 month Career Transition track, which includes 9 months of placement services and 12 months of follow-up services.

#### **Increased Engagement with Employers**

Often times, an employer will assist in providing a new employee with the required licensing and certification to perform their work duties. VETS intends to promote this opportunity by increasing engagement with employers to increase the hiring of Veterans and transitioning servicemembers. This will involve communicating the value proposition for hiring Veterans more effectively; making the hiring process more convenient and efficient; and developing hiring partnerships with national and local employers who provide licensing and certification to their new employees.

VETS is developing new relationships with major private sector organizations to enlist their advice and support to increase Veterans' hiring. A major initiative is a partnership we are developing with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to allow access to their affiliated Chambers around the nation. We will begin with a pilot project involving 12 states. Through this partnership, VETS state directors (DVETs) will be invited to address chief executive officers and senior executives at Chamber breakfasts and lunches to explain the value proposition of hiring Veterans and how to hire Veterans within their city or state.

#### **The Federal Hiring Initiative**

A pathway to licensing and credentialing goes beyond the private sector and involves transition into civilian government jobs. To ensure that Veterans have priority, access to, and the qualification to make this transition, VETS is partnering with the VA, DoD, DHS, and the Office of Personnel Management to lead the effort to implement Executive Order 13518 *Employment of Veterans in the Federal Government*, which President Obama signed on November 9, 2009. This order establishes a Council on Veterans' Employment cochaired by Secretaries Shinseki and Solis with Director Barry serving as Vice Chair. The overall goal is to increase the number of Veterans in the Federal workforce. Additionally, agencies are required to establish a Veterans' Employment Program office, or designate an agency officer or employee with full-time responsibility for its Veterans' Employment Program. A new Web site has been created [www.fedshirevets.gov](http://www.fedshirevets.gov).

The Council has published the government-wide Veterans' Recruitment and Employment Strategic Plan for FY 2010–FY 2012. One of the plan's strategic goals is to align Veterans' and transitioning servicemembers' skills and career aspirations to Federal employment opportunities. While this is not strictly a licensing and certification effort, it is a related initiative that allows the Federal Government to leverage the considerable investment that the country has made in military training and experience.

This initiative will match Veterans' skills with Federal career opportunities by developing an interactive program to translate military skills to Federal civilian occupations. It will produce a document for Veterans and transitioning servicemembers outlining potential Federal careers based on their military experience. Finally, it will also develop resume banks/skills inventories for a transitioning servicemembers, so hiring officials are able to easily search and identify Veterans with skills to meet staffing needs.

#### **Conclusion**

VETS understands the need to provide a clear pathway for Veterans to transfer the significant experience they gain in the military toward good jobs in the civilian economy. DOL and VETS are facilitating this transition through innovative programs, and collaborative engagement with public, private and nonprofit sector organizations that can accelerate the licensing and certification of our Nation's Veterans. As we move forward, we will continue to look for better and more effective ways to inform and enable transitioning servicemembers and Veterans of opportunities to



receive licenses and credentials. During this time of economic uncertainty, it's especially important that we ensure those who have served this country have every opportunity available to leverage their skills and training, when they complete their military service, to create meaningful civilian careers.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear here today, and look forward to working with the Subcommittee on this important topic.

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**Prepared Statement of John R. Campbell, Deputy Under  
Secretary of Defense (Wounded Warrior Care and Transition Policy),  
U.S. Department of Defense**

Madam Chairwoman and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the role the Department of Defense (DoD) plays in helping servicemembers obtain licenses and certifications as they transition from active duty. Education and training are keys to obtaining meaningful employment and a better quality of life once a servicemember retires or separates from the military. Servicemembers are encouraged to take full advantage of all educational opportunities and training programs afforded while they are on active duty such as tuition assistance and the Post-9/11 GI Bill. The Department also focuses on providing separating servicemembers useful information and assistance in all aspects of the transition process, including preparation for post-military employment, as they re-enter civilian life. Attaining a civilian credential promotes professional growth and communicates to employers the transferability of military training and experience. It is crucial to the transition process that servicemembers are able to take full advantage of their military experience in order to reach and achieve their full employment potential after they leave the military.

**TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TAP)**

Although this statement addresses other programs and resources to assist servicemembers in their transition to civilian life, TAP remains the primary platform used by DoD, the Department of Labor (DOL) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to inform, educate and provide one-on-one counseling to transitioning servicemembers regarding the translation of their military skills and experience into civilian language. Successfully accomplishing this activity enables servicemembers to be strong competitors for career opportunities in the civilian workforce.

We continue to provide licensure and certification information in a range of ways and in different formats in order to appeal to individual learning styles and ensure the widest possible dissemination. The information is provided through classroom delivery from an instructor, by online interaction and Internet research, and through one-on-one coaching. This ensures that servicemembers have current and accurate information at their fingertips in order to make informed decisions about their future. A key feature of effective licensure and certification programs is that they are introduced to servicemembers early in their careers, not just at the time of separation, as discussed in more detail later.

TAP is a collaborative partnership among DoD and the Military Services, DOL, VA, and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Each agency is responsible for providing its portion of TAP. During the mandatory DoD portion, commonly referred to as pre-separation counseling, servicemembers, including the National Guard and Reserves, receive information and/or referral to installation experts about licensure and certification. After servicemembers complete the pre-separation counseling portion of TAP, they receive a copy of a checklist (DD Form 2648 for Active Duty and DD Form 2648-1 for the National Guard and Reserves) so they can refer back to it and look up Web sites and other information to reinforce what they received during the pre-separation counseling session. The counselor is required to explain "Licensing, Certification and Apprenticeship Information" and discuss with transitioning servicemembers. The checklists have all the topics required by statute that a counselor must address during the pre-separation counseling session. The forms are used by separating servicemembers and their spouses to record that pre-separation counseling was conducted. There are also additional resources and references addressed during this session.

If the servicemember desires more information on this or any other topic on the checklist, which exceeds the general knowledge of the counselor, then he or she checks a "YES" block next to the item on the form, and the counselor will refer the servicemember to a subject matter expert who is able to assist the member with the desired information, or get the answers to questions which the transition counselor may not have been able to answer. The subject matter expert may be a family sup-

port transition or education counselor located at the installation, or it may be a DOL or VA representative who provides TAP support at the installation. Servicemembers are always encouraged to do research on the internet and it is recommended they start with America's Career InfoNet, the DOL Web site on licensure and certification (<http://www.acinet.org>). The Workforce Credentials Information Center, within this site, provides a wealth of licensure and certification information. The member can also access the Occupational Information Network called O\*Net ([www.onlineonetcenter.org](http://www.onlineonetcenter.org)) which also falls under the purview of our partners at DOL. This site is considered the nation's primary source of occupational information. Using O\*Net allows the servicemember to do a crosswalk between their Military Occupational Code and the civilian equivalency of that code, linking them to the Standard Occupational Classifications in the civilian workforce.

The information received during the prepreparation counseling portion of TAP is reinforced during the other three core components of TAP: DOL's TAP Employment Workshop, VA's Benefits Briefing, and the Disabled Transition Assistance Program (DTAP). National Guard and Reserve personnel also receive a Uniformed Services Employment and Re-Employment Rights (USERRA) briefing in lieu of the full two and a half day TAP Employment Workshop. However, DOL has advised each state's Adjutant General of the opportunity to receive TAP employment workshops whenever and wherever desired. Transitioning servicemembers, including National Guard and Reserve personnel, are strongly encouraged to visit one of approximately 3,000 DOL One-Stop Career Centers where they receive priority service consisting of help with translating their military skills to civilian occupations, receiving a skills assessment, or getting assistance in finding a job. In addition to receiving information on licensure and certification, servicemembers also receive information on apprenticeship resources.

#### **TAP—THE WAY FORWARD**

The current program has been in place for nearly two decades without major enhancements and the original design was not intended for current demand. Initially developed in the late eighties and implemented in the early nineties, TAP exists for the benefit of servicemembers and their families, including Active Duty, National Guard and Reservists. To strengthen TAP and reinforce its value to servicemembers and their families, TAP will move from a traditional event-driven approach to a modern, innovative lifecycle approach. The Department is working to implement this strategic plan with focuses on information technology, strategic communications, and resources and performance management. The end-state for the TAP overhaul will be a population of servicemembers who have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to empower them to make informed career decisions, be competitive in the global workforce and become positive contributors to their community as they transition from military to civilian life.

A Joint Interagency Strategic Working Group for TAP was established and an assessment of TAP was conducted in July and August of 2009 to evaluate overall program effectiveness and identify improvement opportunities. The goal of the assessment was to develop an inventory of potential TAP improvement initiatives by identifying gaps and capturing improvement opportunities across the dimensions of policy, process, content, delivery methods, technology, outreach, and data analytics. A key factor also involved documenting those TAP improvement areas to address previously identified needs, such as Wounded, Ill and Injured (WII) and National Guard and Reserve Component, and identifying opportunities to leverage successes across services, potentially reducing redundant investments.

Assessment findings were organized by the assessment dimensions (stakeholders, policy, process, technology, communications, and metrics) with an understanding that TAP offsite sub-working groups would be organized to develop the "road map" and strategic plan of the future. The major findings involved five core areas: Policy and Legislation; National Guard and Reserve; Strategic Communications; Technology and Social Networking; Standards and Performance Management. The sub-working groups remain in place to advance TAP imperatives. Integrated program management plans and a master schedule are currently being developed to track requirements, activities and progress.

#### **OTHER RESOURCES**

In addition to DOL's "America's Career InfoNet" Web site, other resources such as the Army and Navy Credentialing Opportunities Online (COOL) Web sites are readily available. Army and Navy COOL sites, discussed in greater detail below, explain how Soldiers and Sailors can meet civilian certification and licensure requirements related to their military occupational specialties or ratings. They also serve as a resource to identify what civilian credential relates to a servicemember's mili-

tary occupational specialty (MOS) or Rating and how to obtain them. Additional resources include the DoD Verification of Military Experience and Training (VMET) document, the DoD/DOL United Services Military Apprenticeship Program, the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES), and TurboTAP, DoD's Official Transition Assistance Program Web site. All of the aforementioned were developed and designed to help servicemembers translate their skills and experience into opportunities for civilian employment.

Because the core Transition Assistance Program is predominantly classroom oriented, the Military Services also provide one-on-one counseling, coaching, detailed briefings, guidance and other assistance to meet the needs of our servicemembers. Beyond the "core TAP" a variety of additional workshops and seminars are provided to assist in writing effective resumes, translating military skills to civilian skills, and self and skills assessments. There are also separate workshops on Federal resume writing.

Also included in the pre-separation counseling session is a discussion of DOL's Web site, Career One Stop ([www.careeronestop.org](http://www.careeronestop.org)). In this application, servicemembers link to the Credentials Center, which they can use to locate State-specific occupational licensing requirements, agency contact information and information about industry-recognized certifications. There are also associated workforce education and examinations that test or enhance knowledge, experience and skills in related civilian occupations and professions. These sites have been developed and improved through close partnerships between DoD and DOL.

#### **TURBOTAP**

To accommodate today's technologically reliant servicemembers, TurboTAP was designed for easy accessibility and navigation. Servicemembers can access useful information located throughout the site. Among the many features of the TurboTAP Web site is a Pre-separation Guide for Active Component Servicemembers, a Transition Guide for the Guard and Reserves, and an Employer Hub. Both guides deal with employment assistance, and provide a wealth of information on employment assistance and credentialing programs. They also link directly to Army and Navy COOL, the O\*Net, the Occupational Outlook Handbook and many other resources relating to licensure and certification.

#### **DoD AND MILITARY SERVICES PROGRAMS AND TOOLS**

The DoD and military Services have significantly augmented their focus on licensure and certification. The next portion of this statement will touch on some additional programs and tools put in place by DoD and the Services to assist Members with licensure and certification, prior to a Member leaving active duty.

In recognition of the importance of the need for highly qualified, experienced information assurance personnel, DoD has established a policy requiring certain individuals with privileged access to DoD information systems to obtain civilian credentials. This DoD 8570.1 Directive, made official in August 2004 and implemented according to the requirements of DoD 8570.1M Manual in December 2005, requires any full- or part-time military servicemember, contractor, or foreign employee with privileged access to a DoD information system, regardless of job or occupational series, to obtain a commercial information security credential accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) or equivalent authorized body under the ANSI/ISO/IEC 17024 Standard. The Directive also requires that those same employees maintain their certified status with a certain number of hours of continuing professional education each year. The number of people affected by this mandate is estimated to top 100,000, including any full- or part-time military servicemember, contractor, or foreign employee with privileged access to a DoD information system, regardless of job or occupational series.

#### **ARMY**

The Army has embraced licensure and certification as a key method of helping Soldiers apply their military training and work experience to the civilian workforce. They have conducted extensive research to link each MOS to civilian jobs and applicable civilian licenses and certifications. The Army has identified civilian credentials related to 100 percent of its enlisted and Warrant Officer MOSs. Some of these credentials are directly related to the MOS and others are related to embedded skills attained by the Soldier through Army training and experience.

The extent to which Soldiers are able to use their military training and experience to attain civilian licenses and certifications is determined through comprehensive gap analysis comparing MOS training with civilian credentialing requirements. The gap analysis is conducted on credentials determined to be most directly related to the MOS or to the skills attained through MOS training and experience.

As part of the gap analysis, an attainability rating is assigned to each relevant credential. This rating indicates the estimated ability of a first-term Soldier to obtain a given credential. Attainability ratings reflect the likelihood of a Soldier attaining the corresponding credential during his or her first term of service, attaining it in a subsequent enlistment, or encountering difficulty in translating their military training and work experience to a civilian credential.

The results of the research linking MOSs to civilian jobs and credentials, along with the results of the gap analysis, are available to Soldiers through the Army COOL Web site (<https://www.cool.army.mil>). This robust site provides Soldiers, counselors, family Members, and employers with comprehensive information about certification and licensure relevant to Army MOSs. Enhancements to the Army COOL Web site are continual. New search features and additional credentialing resource information were recently added and the Web site was also expanded to include Warrant Officers.

The site also helps Soldiers find civilian credentialing programs related to their MOS and it helps them understand the requirements for obtaining a credential. In addition, it identifies resources that will pay credentialing fees. The Web site is specifically designed to aid Soldiers in translating their military training and work experience to the civilian workforce. COOL Web site usage is consistently high. The site receives thousands of “hits” each month, approximately two-thirds of which are MOS-specific. Soldiers can also receive one-on-one counseling in licensure and certification from education counselors at each installation. The Army COOL initiative is closely integrated with other Army and DoD programs that can help Soldiers meet credentialing requirements, including the servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Army Degree (SOCAD) program, DANTES credentialing program, and Army e-learning. In recognition of the importance of credentialing for Soldier professional development, the Army, in 2003, began awarding promotion points for technical certifications for Soldiers competing for promotion from Sergeant to Staff Sergeant. These Soldiers can receive 10 promotion points for each certification up to a total of 50 points.

#### **NAVY**

The Navy’s credentialing program offers Department of Navy (DON) servicemembers expanded opportunities to earn civilian occupational licenses and certifications. The program has been developed to promote recruiting and retention and to professionalize the Navy workforce (both active duty and reserve), thus improving mission readiness. It also enhances the Sailor’s ability to make a smooth transition to the civilian workforce. The Navy’s credentialing program has two key components—dissemination of information on civilian licensure and certification opportunities and payment of credentialing exam fees.

The Navy COOL, a publicly accessible Web site (<https://www.cool.navy.mil>), serves as a hub of comprehensive information to guide Sailors in pursuing occupational credentials related to their Navy work experience and training. The Web site was brought online in 2006 in collaboration with the Army and utilizes the same underlying database of civilian credentials that is used for the Army COOL Web site. Navy COOL disseminates the results of extensive research and analysis linking each DON rating, job, designator, and occupation to civilian jobs and applicable civilian credentials. It provides the results of comparability analyses conducted to identify potential gaps between DON training and civilian credentialing requirements and provides extensive information on resources available to fill the gaps. The Web site is targeted toward Sailors, family Members, Navy veterans, career and education counselors, credentialing agencies, and potential civilian employers. COOL feedback shows interest from other military services (active, reserve, and veterans) for their own service-specific COOL Web site.

In September 2007, DON approved funding of credential exams that are directly related to a Sailor’s job or occupation or to a critical skill set within. The Navy funds both mandatory and discretionary credentialing exams. To date, over 2,400 credential/job combinations are approved for funding and over 34,000 exams have been funded (as of 30-Jun-2010) at an average cost of approximately \$270 per exam.

Program metrics indicate the success of the Navy credentialing program is high:

- To date, Navy COOL has experienced over 67.2 million hits (averaging 2.2 million hits per month).
- Credentialing staff has personally briefed over 19,000 Sailors on the Navy’s credentialing program.
- More than 5,000 e-mails have been received providing feedback on the Navy’s credentialing program with over 98 percent of the feedback being positive.

- More than 3,000 Sailors participating in the Navy's credentialing program are re-enlisting/extending to take advantage of this program.

### **AIR FORCE**

Air Force emphasis on licensure and certification is twofold—career-related degrees and certification from civilian schools. The first option an Airman has is a degree conferred only to enlisted Members only by the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF). CCAF confers associate degrees in each enlisted member's career field. The degree consists of accredited college-level training from the Air Force along with general education courses from civilian colleges. Each year the Air Force confers over 17,000 associate in applied science degrees. Since CCAF received regional accreditation in 1980 from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, it has conferred a total of 344,000 associate degrees. The degree is equivalent to the civilian world's terminal associate degrees for trade certification.

All Air Force Specialty Codes (career fields) translate well to comparable civilian work experience. In a 2009 survey of CCAF graduates, 82 percent said that most or all of CCAF credit transferred to bachelor-level degree programs. In addition to the associate degree opportunity, Air Force policy is to fund one license or certificate per Air Force career to both officers and enlisted. Each year the Air Force expends approximately five million dollars for licensure/certification of Airmen, or approximately 3 percent of the military tuition assistance budget with 3,500 earned certifications. The COOL search-tool equivalent for Airmen, known as the Credentialing and Research Tool (CERT), links the CCAF degree programs with nationally recognized professional certifications relevant to specific career fields.

### **MARINE CORPS**

The Marine Corps uses a variety of resources to assist its Marines with licensure and certification, including DOL's America's Career InfoNet Web site, Army and Navy COOL Web sites, the VMET Document, the United Services Military Apprenticeship Program, the Occupational Information Network O\*Net, DANTES and TurboTAP. Additionally, there are Marine Corps Transition Assistance Management Program (TAMP) personnel who are Certified Workforce Development Professionals and possess the skills necessary to assist Marines in translating their military experience and training into understandable civilian terminology.

The Marine Corps has also conducted extensive reviews of the transition and education programs and services and established a planning framework for major program reforms. The primary objective is to provide every Marine with an opportunity to successfully achieve their stated performance goals from accession to interment. The program redesign will include the integration of complementary services, to include Transition Assistance, Voluntary and Off Duty Education, Personal Financial Management, and Family Member Employment Assistance. This integrated personal and professional readiness approach to program delivery is being developed to support Marine Corps institutional aims and successful occupation of individual Marines via established roadmaps for professional military development/promotion, portable skill development, transportable education credit contributing to employment/career, and financial planning to support personal and professional roadmaps.

### **OTHER EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE**

The Operation Warfighter (OWF) program is a DoD-sponsored internship program that offers recuperating wounded, ill and injured servicemembers meaningful activity that positively impacts wellness and offers a formal means of transition to return to duty or enter into the civilian workforce. The main objective of OWF is to place recuperating servicemembers in supportive work settings that positively benefit the recuperation process.

OWF represents a great opportunity for transitioning servicemembers to augment their employment readiness by building their resumes, exploring employment interests, developing job skills, benefiting from both formal and on-the-job training opportunities, and gaining valuable Federal Government work experience that will help prepare them for the future. The program strives to demonstrate to participants that the skills they have obtained in the military are transferable into civilian employment. For servicemembers who will return to duty, the program enables these participants to maintain their skill sets and provides the opportunity for additional training and experience that can subsequently benefit the military. OWF simultaneously enables Federal employers to better familiarize themselves with the skill sets of wounded, ill and injured servicemembers as well as benefit from the considerable talent and dedication of these transitioning servicemembers.

To date, the program has placed approximately 1,600 servicemembers across more than 100 different Federal employers and sub-components. The program currently has 225 active internship placements.

The Veterans Employment Initiative (VEI), created by Executive Order 13518 aims to increase the number of veterans in the Federal Government. DoD is a strategic partner in this initiative along with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), VA, DPL, and DHS. The Order established an interagency Council on Veterans Employment that advises the President and the Director of OPM on the initiative. The Council serves as a national forum for promoting veterans' employment opportunities in the executive branch and develops performance measures to assess the effectiveness of the VEI. Agencies covered by the VEI have established Veterans Employment Program Offices or designated a full-time staff person dedicated to providing employment services to veterans. Veterans and the public may also access the VEI's helpful Web site at [www.fedshirevets.gov](http://www.fedshirevets.gov).

The National Resource Directory (NRD) is a partnership among DoD, DOL and VA. The information contained within the NRD ([www.NationalResourceDirectory.gov](http://www.NationalResourceDirectory.gov)) is from Federal, state and local government agencies; veterans service and benefit organizations; non-profit and community-based organizations; academic institutions and professional associations that provide assistance to wounded warriors and their families.

The NRD is an easily accessible, comprehensive tool for transitioning servicemembers who are looking for education and training-related, and employment opportunities. Content on the National Resource Directory is gathered, reviewed and updated by a team of subject matter experts with a military background. The NRD features hundreds of resources on job training, scholarships, tuition assistance programs, internships, apprenticeships, licensing & certification, the GI Bill and the Yellow Ribbon Program.

To ensure that users are getting the information they need, the NRD utilizes several social media methods to distribute resources and new information. One of these methods is an e-mail marketing service. Currently, more than 3,200 NRD subscribers receive regular updates about education, training and employment. News and updates are also posted through the NRD Facebook page and LinkedIn groups.

### CONCLUSION

Although the focus of this hearing is on what DoD, VA and DOL are doing to assist servicemembers in translating their military training and experience into comparable civilian sector competencies as they seek employment, there also needs to be a focus on what the servicemember needs and finds most effective. Each agency must do all it can to provide the best possible information, education, counseling, coaching and support to our deserving servicemembers. The discussion must also include servicemember responsibility and we believe that by providing an array of sources of information and support mechanisms to the Members we are helping them take hold of their future and equipping them with the tools to direct their careers far into the future. There is no doubt we can be more efficient and effective, and we will.

The Department understands there is a strong consensus within Congress and the Veterans' community that more needs to be done to help servicemembers translate their Military Occupational Codes into civilian sector language. Even though a great deal is being done, the Department recognizes that more can be done and that we must continue to find new ways to not only reach our servicemembers and impart knowledge to them, but also strive to ensure they grasp and understand the information. We must also measure the successes and identify best practices.

The Department acknowledges the importance of providing servicemembers with clear and definitive information on licensure and credentials across the duration of their military careers. Providing this information early on allows servicemembers to plan and seek out any additional classes required to achieve their goals. To that end, the Department is revamping TAP as we move into the next decade. Transition assistance will become a process that occurs throughout the military lifecycle from the time of accession through separation, not a single event that occurs at the time of separation or retirement, or in the case of demobilizing/deactivating National Guard and Reserves, when they are released from active duty.

Over the next year we will be working on a number of initiatives relating to the revamping of TAP, including: Policy and Legislation, improved processes related to deployment patterns and realities of the National Guard and Reserves, Strategic Communications and Outreach, Technology and Social Networking and Resource and Performance Management. We will keep the Subcommittee abreast of our progress and we will solicit your input as well.

Madam Chairwoman, this concludes my statement. On behalf of the men and women in the military today and their families, I thank you and the Members of this Subcommittee for your steadfast support.

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**Prepared Statement of Margarita Cocker, Deputy Director, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**

Madam Chairwoman, Ranking Member Boozman, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to appear before you today to discuss how VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Program helps servicemembers apply their Military Occupational Specialties to employment in the civilian sector. VR&E strives to insure a seamless transition for servicemembers and Veterans through outreach and early intervention. VA's Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and Employment Coordinators leverage Servicemembers' and Veterans' transferable skills whenever possible, while keeping the focus on individuals' current level of abilities and aptitudes, as well as their future career potential. VA greatly appreciates the opportunity to discuss this important topic.

**Overview of Veterans Employment Services**

VR&E's primary mission is to assist servicemembers and Veterans with service-connected disabilities prepare for, and obtain, meaningful and sustainable employment through the provision of robust services individually tailored to each individual's needs. Services are provided at our 57 Regional Office locations and over 100 out-based VR&E locations. VR&E services begin with comprehensive evaluations to help servicemembers and Veterans understand their interests, aptitudes, and transferable skills. Next, our vocational exploration phase focuses their potential career goals based on labor-market demands and market requirements. This process helps each Veteran or Servicemember make informed choices and participate in the development of a rehabilitation plan that, to the maximum extent possible, builds upon his or her transferable skills toward an ultimate career goal. To help these individuals achieve their rehabilitation goals, VR&E may provide a broad range of employment services such as:

- Translation of military experience to civilian skill sets using industry standard Transferrable Skills Assessments (TSA);
- Short-term training geared to augment existing skills that increase employability, such as certification preparation tests and sponsorship of certification;
- Long-term training, including on-the-job training, apprenticeship training, and college-level training, or services that support self-employment; and
- Direct job-placement services, including resume development, job-seeking-skills training, and post-placement follow-up services.

**Licensing and Credentialing**

Licensing and credentialing assistance is provided, as needed, to facilitate employment in the particular individual's specific occupation. For example, many information-technology jobs require certification, while nursing and mental-health counseling fields require licensure. For Veterans and servicemembers with more severe injuries and barriers to employment, additional leading-edge certifications can also be provided to make them more competitive. The goal of each VR&E rehabilitation plan is to maximize the individual's transferable skills; match his or her interests and skill sets with labor-market demands; ensure compatibility of the job with existing disability issues, using adaptive technology whenever possible; and help the Veteran or Servicemember enter the job market at a level on par with his or her peer group and into a career position in which he or she can thrive—even if his or her disability should worsen.

I would like to emphasize the importance of transferable-skills assessments and corresponding licensure or credentialing. During the vocational exploration phase, VR&E counselors identify servicemembers' and Veterans' military and civilian transferable skills and discuss these skills with them. The VR&E program conducts thorough assessments of Veterans' interests, aptitudes, and abilities, and then provides necessary services to ensure that exiting servicemembers and Veterans are able to compete for and achieve the highest level of civilian employment for which they qualify. VR&E counselors help individuals capitalize on their transferable skills when developing plans for future civilian career goals, while also insuring that interests, abilities, and aptitudes are matched up to these goals. Once servicemembers' and Veterans' career goals are identified, VR&E tailors individual-

ized and comprehensive services to ensure employability in their chosen career fields, including proper credentialing, education, and licensing. This focus on basing the next career step on transferable skills enables these individuals to maximize their existing skills and ultimately obtain careers at a more advanced level.

#### **Conclusion**

The challenges our disabled servicemembers and Veterans face while in transition are an urgent priority for VR&E and VA. Building upon the excellent skills obtained in the military makes these individuals more marketable, and assists them in qualifying for more technical and advanced career opportunities. VR&E focuses on enhancing preexisting certifiable and or licensed skills attained during servicemembers' and Veterans' military experience, thus maximizing the investment in training they have made during their service on active duty.

Madam Chairwoman, this concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or other Members of the Subcommittee may have.

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#### **Statement of Hon. John Boozman, Ranking Republican Member, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity**

Good afternoon.

Madam Chair, in reading today's testimony, I saw lots of discussion about the Transition Assistance Program and lots of Web sites that translate military skills and occupations into civilian equivalents. But I saw very little about how we go about getting education and training institutions to adjust their curricula to account for military training and education. Secretary Jefferson, I congratulate you on being the only witness today to directly identify the core of the issue as the role of state and local governments in licensing and certification. Too often, our men and women are needlessly required to repeat education or training already gained in military service. To me that means that states need to be more flexible in recognizing military training and skills.

I am disappointed that the National Governors' Association declined once again to join today's discussion. To me, the states hold the key to solving this dilemma. We cannot afford the current economically inefficient system that ignores the millions of dollars spent on top quality military education and training.

Madam Chair, maybe the best we can hope for is to provide veterans with the best education and training benefits and work with the education and certifying industries to increase the credit given for training as a way to speed licensing and certification.

I yield back.

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#### **Statement of John L. Wilson, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans**

Madam Chairwoman and Members of the Subcommittee:

On behalf of the 1.2 million Members of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), I am honored to present this testimony in accordance with our congressional charter and DAV's mission to "advance the interests, and work for the betterment, of all wounded, injured, and disabled American veterans."

This Subcommittee's concern for the financial circumstance of veterans and their families is well-founded, given the economic downturn our Nation's economy has taken. During this same timeframe, our Nation is involved in two wars and multiple deployments are no longer the exception, but rather the norm. Given this deployment pace, any previous opportunities military servicemembers may have had to obtain additional education or training on their own in order to meet the requirements for licensing or credentialing for the time when they are no longer in the military have become difficult to find. Such self-effort is essential in most career fields when active duty personnel separate or when Guard and Reserve personnel are deactivated and they want to either find employment or return to earlier civilian careers. This is because most progression from apprentice to journeyman for enlisted personnel in most military career fields do not also result in civilian-equivalent licensure and certification.

Licensure and certification are a primary form of recognition of competency in job-related skills and are relied upon by employers for a host of occupations to ensure that employees have the skill and knowledge base necessary to effectively ply their trades. Private sector employers, Federal, state, and local government agencies, pro-



professional associations, unions and the general public turned to credentialing to regulate entry into occupations and to also promote safety, professionalism, and career growth. The amount of private sector credentialing has grown tremendously and hundreds of professional and trade associations offer certification in specific fields. The past few years have shown a similar increase in occupational regulation by both the state and Federal Governments. As a result, over the past decade, the number of both mandatory and optional credentialing programs has increased steadily.

The education, training, and experience obtained by military servicemembers provide tangible benefits for our Nation's defense. This same background can also provide a significant contribution to a skilled civilian workforce. However, every year, skilled servicemembers leaving the armed forces miss out on the chance to quickly move into good, high-paying, career-building jobs because they typically must undergo lengthy and expensive retraining in order to meet civilian licensure and certification requirements, often for the same type of jobs they held in the military. This time-consuming and costly waste of valuable human resources costs the veteran through forced underemployment, costs business because skilled workers are unavailable, and it has a negative impact on the economy due to delayed job creation and consumer spending, and unnecessary unemployment compensation insurance payments.

Madam Chair, on January 14, 1999, former Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony Principi presented the final report of the Congressional Commission on Servicemembers and Veterans Transition Assistance. The issues raised in that report more than a decade ago still hold true. The Commission asserted then, and DAV agrees, that Congress, the administration and private companies must provide transitioning servicemembers with the means and opportunity to succeed in their civilian lives and to invest their talent and ability in the American economy.

At that time, our Nation had enjoyed several years of sustained economic expansion yet the unemployment rate for newly separated veterans remained comparatively high. Unemployment rates for male veterans aged 20 to 24 and 35 to 39, the ages when most servicemembers separate or retire, were higher than rates for other veteran age cohorts and were higher than rates for similar nonveteran males. This unemployment pattern existed despite the fact that veterans have solid grounding in basic skills, are disciplined, have a demonstrated positive work history, are highly motivated, and have shown an ability to continually upgrade their skills.

Today, according to a July 2, 2010 article in *Army Times*, the unemployment rate for veterans rose slightly in June 2010, to 8 percent overall and 11.5 percent for Iraq and Afghanistan-era veterans. This information raises the concern that expanding programs aimed at helping veterans find work may not be working as quickly as hoped in this stagnant job market. June employment statistics released Friday by the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics show the overall unemployment rate for veterans rose slightly from 7.8 percent in May. For veterans from the Iraq and Afghanistan era, the June unemployment rate was 11.5 percent, up from 10.6 percent in May. This is an improvement from March of this year when the unemployment rate was 14.7 percent. For new male veterans, the unemployment rate for June is 10.8 percent, compared with 15.5 percent for new female veterans. Previously, the rate was about equal for new male and female veterans.

Efforts are under way to improve the employment situation. On March 29, 2010 the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Veterans' Employment and Training Service announced a \$2 million grant competition to assist eligible veterans by providing employment, training, support services, credentialing and networking information in renewable and sustainable energy. The grants are intended to provide services to assist in reintegrating eligible veterans into meaningful employment within the labor force and to stimulate the development of effective service delivery systems that will address the complex employability problems facing eligible veterans.

The DOL has also been engaged with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to provide employment opportunities to wounded veterans while still in recovery. Job fairs have been held near the hospitals where these veterans are recovering. Employers meet with potential employees to assess their skills and, if hired, establish a mentoring relationship to facilitate their transition from recovery and transition from military service to private sector employment. Just such a career fair was held at the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) in Bethesda on June 4, 2010. The Fleet and Family Support Office, NNMC, in partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Chamber Foundation hosted the event. The career fair included leading employers in various industries looking to fill a wide range of positions from entry-level to management. Servicemembers from Bethesda, Walter Reed, Ft. Belvoir, Ft. Meade, and Quantico participated.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) also provides assistance to veterans seeking employment through its Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E)

services. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors work with eligible veterans to address impediments to future employment and locate other resources to address any rehabilitation and employment needs identified during the evaluation. Referral to other resources may include state vocational rehabilitation programs; DOL employment programs for disabled veterans; state, Federal or local agencies providing services for employment or small business development; Internet-based resources for rehabilitation and employment; and information about applying for financial aid.

While much has been accomplished, work still remains. The Department of Defense (DoD) indicates that each year approximately 25,000 active duty servicemembers are found “not fit for duty” as a result of medical conditions that may qualify for VA disability ratings and eligibility for VR&E services.

In response to criticism of the VR&E Service, former VA Secretary Anthony Principi formed the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Task Force. The Secretary’s intent was to conduct an “unvarnished top to bottom independent examination, evaluation, and analysis of the VR&E program.” The Secretary asked the task force to recommend “effective, efficient, up-to-date methods, materials, and metrics, tools, technology, and partnerships to provide disabled veterans the opportunities and services they need” to obtain employment. In March of 2004, the task force released its report, with 110 recommendations for VR&E service improvements. By the end of fiscal year 2007, only 89 of the 110 recommendations had been implemented.

Citing several studies of VR&E done within the past decade, the Veterans’ Disability Benefits Commission (VDBC) in 2007 identified a host of ongoing problems with the program, including the following:

- A need for a more aggressive and proactive approach to serving veterans with serious employment barriers;
- Limited numbers of VR&E counselors and case managers to handle a growing caseload;
- Inadequate and ineffective tracking and reporting on participants;
- Employment outcomes that are measured no further than 60 days after hiring; and
- The current 12-year limit for veterans to take advantage of VR&E, which may be unrealistic.

The coauthors of the *Independent Budget—AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States*—continue to support the recommendations of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Task Force, as well as the following recommendations of the VDBC:

- Expand access to all medically separated servicemembers;
- Make all disabled veterans eligible for vocational rehabilitation and counseling services;
- Screen VR&E counselors and all applicants for Individual Unemployment ratings;
- Increase VR&E staffing and resources, track employment success beyond 60 days, and implement satisfaction surveys of participants and employers; and
- Create incentives to encourage disabled veterans to complete their rehabilitation plans.

DAV notes that more must be done to ensure that our highly trained and qualified servicemembers do not face unnecessary barriers as they transition from the military to civilian life. We recommend that DoD, DOL and VA work with employers, trade unions, and licensure and credentialing entities to provide a means for military personnel to receive the necessary civilian equivalency to their chosen career fields when receiving military education and training, thus honoring their military service and allowing them to more easily transition into a civilian occupation without the need for complex and repetitive training or apprenticeships.

This recommendation is in line with Resolution No. 047, passed at the DAV’s most recent National Convention, which supports licensure and certification of Active Duty service personnel. DoD provides some of the best vocational training in the Nation for its military personnel. It establishes, measures, and evaluates performance standards for every occupation within the Armed Forces. There are many occupational career fields in the Armed Forces that can easily translate to a civilian occupation and there are many occupations in the civilian workforce that require a license or certification. These occupational standards meet or exceed the civilian license or certification criteria. Yet, many former military personnel, certified as proficient in their military occupational career, are not licensed or certified to perform a comparable job in the civilian workforce. This situation creates an artificial

barrier to employment upon separation from military service. DAV supports efforts to eliminate employment barriers that impede the transfer of military job skills to the civilian labor market. Additionally, we ask DoD to take appropriate steps to ensure that servicemembers be trained, tested, evaluated, and issued any licensure or certification that may be required in the civilian workforce. We urge Congress to enact legislation making the Chapter 33 Post-9/11 GI Bill available to pay for all necessary civilian license and certification examination requirements, including necessary preparatory courses. Last, we support efforts to increase the civilian labor market's acceptance of the occupational training provided by the military.

We must also encourage that additional attention be given to perceptions about veterans held by the public. As noted in the January 1999 final report of the Congressional Commission on Servicemembers and Veterans Transition Assistance, there is a fundamental lack of awareness by civilian employers of the positive personal and professional characteristics possessed by most servicemembers and veterans. Previous attempts to inform the public and employers of these attributes have been short-lived and limited. There is also a general lack of awareness among employers of where and how to recruit veteran applicants for civilian jobs.

A sustained national marketing program must be undertaken to favorably influence employer perceptions of veterans, and subsequent hiring decisions as well as where to recruit veteran applicants. Veterans bring skill sets that readily fit into practically every area of economic enterprise in our Nation's economy, yet many private employers may perceive us to only have skills suited to security or law enforcement while an examination of the hundreds of career fields in the military would certainly indicate otherwise.

Madam Chair, I again want to thank you and the Subcommittee for the opportunity to present the views of DAV.

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#### **Statement of Paralyzed Veterans of America**

Chairwoman Herseth Sandlin, Ranking Member Boozman, Members of the Subcommittee, Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) would like to thank you for the opportunity to express our views on the issue of opportunities for transitioning veterans. This Subcommittee has worked diligently during this session to ensure employment opportunities are available for new veterans and veterans of the past. PVA appreciates the hard work and sincere effort that this Subcommittee applies to their mission which results in programs to help veterans assimilate back into society.

The emphasis on licensure and certification can present significant barriers for transitioning military personnel seeking employment in the civilian workforce. Credentialing standards, such as education, training, and experience requirements, are developed based on traditional methods for obtaining competency in the civilian workforce. As a result, many transitioning military personnel who have received their career preparation through military service find it difficult to meet certification and licensing requirements due to the lack of civilian recognition of military training and experience. For some, this inability to become credentialed bars entry into employment in their fields entirely. For others, the lack of credentials will make it difficult to compete with their civilian-sector peers for jobs. Those who are able to obtain employment in their fields without the applicable credentials may face decreased earnings and limited promotion potential.

Pilot programs have been initiated in some states to provide credentialing to servicemembers in a limited number of fields. PVA believes that there are a number of factors that have an impact on the ability of current and former military personnel to obtain civilian credentials. Many civilian credentialing boards do not have adequate knowledge of and do not give proper recognition to military training and experience. The lack of clarity regarding the procedures for exchange of transcripts between military and civilian credentialing boards creates undue barriers for military personnel.

The Department of Defense (DoD) should assist Members preparing to transition from active duty to civilian employment through the proper dissemination of information. The DoD and the Department of Labor (DOL) must maintain involvement with the certifying organizations and coordinate efforts among Federal agencies and private industry. Armed Forces training schools should pay greater attention to the activities and requirements of civilian credentialing agencies.

### **ALTERNATIVE USE OF THE POST-9/11 G.I. BILL**

PVA along with the other coauthors of *The Independent Budget* supports the idea of using the Post-9/11 GI Bill for employment training programs. This highly regarded benefit should be available to veterans as they enroll in additional or supplemental training which would complete the requirements of civilian certification or licensing. This would involve expansion of Chapter 33 to include vocational, on-the-job training, apprenticeships and certificate programs. The original GI Bill provided benefits for over 8 million WWII veterans, but just over 2 million of those went to a 4-year, degree seeking institution. The other 6 million sought training through apprenticeships, on-the-job training (OJT) and vocational training.

Today's veterans are not provided the same benefit. The Post-9/11 GI Bill only provides benefits to veterans who seek a degree. The remaining veterans must continue to use the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB). Veterans pursuing these non-degree seeking careers are being penalized by being forced to pay into the MGIB to later receive a lesser benefit. Veterans, regardless of their post-military occupational desires, should have access to the benefits of the Post-9/11 GI Bill. In accordance with the recommendations of *The Independent Budget for FY 2011*, Congress should grant Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to veterans who enroll in apprenticeships, OJT and vocational programs.

### **DoD MILITARY—WORK TRANSITION PROGRAM**

The DoD Military—Work Transition Program could be an extension of the DoD “Operation Transition.” Operation Transition established a framework for transition programs administered by each of the military service branches. The program established in 2008, offers an extensive array of services and benefits designed for separating servicemembers. These services include counseling, personal financial planning, information about Federal Government employment, and other tools to prepare the separating members for future employment. This military-work transition program would resemble the current DoD fellowship program. The fellowship program allows both military and civilian staff of the DoD to work in support positions for Members of Congress and Federal agencies. The military personnel continue in their current pay grade, including benefits, since they are still DoD employees.

This would start as a pilot program which would allow the necessary time for Congress to evaluate its success and the effort involved in creating and monitoring such a program. However, legislative action may be required to allow military personnel to work in civilian nongovernment positions.

This initiative would involve DoD working in coordination with the Department of Labor (DOL), Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS). VETS would identify and encourage private sector organizations that would participate. The ideal corporations would be those organizations that have already demonstrated that they value veterans when hiring new employees; organizations such as Home Depot, UPS, BNSF Railway, and GE. The Fortune 500 list contains many corporations that have never considered the benefits of employing veterans. However, those corporations that have multiple locations and a continuing need for mature personnel may be interested in this program. The message and benefits of employing veterans must continue to be presented to the business community.

There is a wide variety of civilian work positions that this temporary personnel program could engage with. These could involve entry level positions as well as management training positions. Those positions that involve a collective bargaining agreement or a union contract would not be available for this program.

Additionally, a 6 month period toward the end of a service Member's commitment could be the length of this program. The employer would agree to expose the military personnel to several aspects of the organizations activities such as production, marketing, sales, distribution, or financial services. The program's goals would be to allow the military personnel to experience more than one position while providing an additional staff Member for the employer. The employer would benefit from the additional assistance of a mature, disciplined, goal orientated staff Member. This individual could be an ideal candidate for permanent employment for the company upon separation from the military.

Those military personnel who participate in this program would realize some of the challenges and often misfortunes of the corporate world. After experiencing the business world, some individuals could have second thoughts about their future. During this temporary work assignment, participants would undoubtedly evaluate the entire military benefits package they currently have. Traditionally starting salaries in the corporate world for most departing military personnel including officers are less than expected. This reality could influence a participant to decide to con-

tinue their career in the military for the quality of life it offers for themselves and their family. PVA would encourage the DoD, DOL, and VA to work together to explore this possibility of a military-work transition program.

#### **MEDICS AND CORPSMEN TO PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS**

The medical support personnel serving in the military have received many months of intense state-of-the-art training in their medical specialty including emergency medical procedures. Some may have advanced training with years of practical experience which could include life-saving procedures performed while serving in Iraq or Afghanistan. Unfortunately, this real life experience is not recognized by the civilian medical field. A program should be established including financial support in the form of a grant with accredited physician assistant colleges to help those transitioning medics and corpsmen. This would establish a fast track program that would encourage the participating medical teaching facilities to recognize and credit the military experience. After receiving an individual evaluation of a veteran's military medical background, and completion of appropriate supplemental classes, a veteran with previous military medical experience would be a candidate for the position of physician assistant. There is a projected shortage of medical support personnel in the future including physician assistants. These military trained, experienced personnel should be encouraged to stay in the medical field with the support and direction from programs offered by the VA.

#### **CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR DOL—VETERANS JOB CORPS**

DOL VETS will soon offer a unique program for younger veterans up to age 24. The program which will be a version of their Job Corps program has never been targeted to veterans in the past. This apprenticeship program for young veterans will teach the necessary skills required for one of several trades. The program will offer housing, food, a living stipend, medical care from a VA facility, and the camaraderie of other veterans as they face new challenges. The pilot program will be offered at three mid-west locations this year. Unfortunately the program is limited to the first three hundred veterans that apply. With the demonstrated success of this program, we hope it will be expanded to every region of the country soon. This can offer hope for the men and women that have honorably served their country, but have not received specialty training that is transferable to the civilian world.

#### **BRING BACK THE MESSAGE "HIRE THE VETERAN"**

This slogan of "Hire the Veteran" has disappeared from the literature and information produced by the Department of Veterans' Affairs. For decades this message was included on many informational documents and VA forms distributed by the VA.

In the present economic situation with a disproportional number of veterans unemployed the VA should start emphasizing this message once again. All Federal agencies that distribute information to the public should include this message somewhere on their literature. The VA could provide guidance to the other agencies on this initiative. This would be a constant reminder to America that the government does care about the employment of veterans. It would also remind government agencies that "they" should also hire the veteran.

Chairwoman Herseth Sandlin, Ranking Member Boozman, PVA would like to thank you again for allowing us to share our views on veterans employment. We are always available to work with this Subcommittee as it explores employment opportunities for America's veterans.



**MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD**

Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
 Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity  
 Washington, DC.  
 August 12, 2010

Mr. Eric Hilleman  
 Director, National Legislative Service  
 Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States  
 200 Maryland Avenue, NE  
 Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mr. Hilleman:

I would like to request your response to the enclosed questions for the record I am submitting in reference to our House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity hearing on *Licensure and Credentialing* on July 29, 2010. Please answer the enclosed hearing questions by no later than Thursday, September 23, 2010.

In an effort to reduce printing costs, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, in cooperation with the Joint Committee on Printing, is implementing some formatting changes for material for all Full Committee and Subcommittee hearings. Therefore, it would be appreciated if you could provide your answers consecutively on letter size paper, single-spaced. In addition, please restate the question in its entirety before the answer.

Due to the delay in receiving mail, please provide your response to Ms. Orfa Torres by fax at (202) 225-2034. If you have any questions, please call (202) 226-5491.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Herseth Sandlin  
 Chairwoman

JL/ot

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**Responses from Eric Hilleman  
 Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States**

**Question 1:** Is there a Web site that servicemembers and veterans can access to learn which schools provide college credit based on their military experience?

**Response:** To review the programs offered by the American Council on Education (ACE), please visit: <http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ProgramsServices/MilitaryPrograms/index.htm>.

**Question 2:** Do you believe the barriers for servicemembers and veterans' translating their skills to the private sector has improved since our last hearing in 2007?

**Response:** Many of the same barriers persist. ACE has evaluated military schools and Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) for transferable credit for a number of years. However, in the area of State-by-State accreditation/licensure it still depends upon the state and industry's interest in accepting the applicable MOS or experiences to meet equivalency for licensure.

**Question 2(a):** What has changed since then that you believe has helped the progression and what do you notice is still missing?

**Response:** With the advent of the Post-9/11 GI Bill many schools are interested in attracting Federal dollars, which has led to a surge in colleges and universities developing programming for veterans on campus. What hasn't changed is the levels of funding under the GI Bill in the areas of vocational training, OJT, and apprentices. There needs to be an incentive for states and professional industries to attract veterans, as well as standardization among industries and states in accepting military experience.

**Question 3:** What are the key things that Congress can do to help veterans transition with their military training to a civilian career?

**Response:** We need to better understand where the opportunities are for improvement. Given the high degree of variance among states and industries, we must understand what and where needs the greatest attention of Congress. The VFW rec-

ommends a study of the states and industries to determine which states are granting licensure for comparable military experiences.

**Question 4:** In training servicemembers to do their jobs, is the military looking for different skills than their civilian counterparts?

**Response:** Not necessarily, both the military and the civilian sector are seeking intelligent individuals capable of performing at the highest standards under pressure.

**Question 5:** If Congress does not have the authority to provide licensure and certification for veterans leaving the military, then what should be done?

**Response:** The VFW stands by its recommendation, two separate and distinct studies understanding the specific challenges and opportunities for improving the transfer of military education/experiences into civilian sector equivalents.

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Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity  
Washington, DC.  
*August 12, 2010*

Mr. Joseph C. Sharpe, Jr.  
Director, National Economic Commission  
The American Legion  
608 K Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Mr. Sharpe:

I would like to request your response to the enclosed questions for the record I am submitting in reference to our House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity hearing on *Licensure and Credentialing* on July 29, 2010. Please answer the enclosed hearing questions by no later than Thursday, September 23, 2010.

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Sincerely,

Stephanie Herseth Sandlin  
*Chairwoman*

JL/ot

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American Legion  
Washington, DC.  
*September 23, 2010*

Honorable Stephanie Herseth Sandlin, Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity  
Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
U.S. House of Representatives  
335 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Herseth Sandlin:

Thank you for allowing The American Legion to participate in the Subcommittee hearing on various legislation on July 29, 2010. I respectfully submit the following in response to your additional questions:

**Question 1:** In your testimony you recommend that "credentialing agencies could develop a military specific credentialing requirement that recognize equivalent training." If each State has different and unique requirements, how can this be done?

**Response:** There are recognized credentialing agencies that oversee credentialing between states and could assist in recognizing the credentialing requirements that military servicemembers undergo during their military training. This would serve to assist servicemembers and veterans in their transition to civilian positions.

**Question 2:** Is it the States or the Federal Government that would be in the best position to help veterans with licensing and certification?

**Response:** The American Legion would recommend both. Each State has a separate licensing and credentialing requirement that needs to recognize military training as part of fulfilling their state requirements. In addition, there are national licensings that can be addressed by that specific Federal agency. The American Legion sees the Federal agencies as recognizing military training for credentialing earlier, due to the States having different and multiple requirements.

**Question 3:** What are the key things that Congress can do to help veterans transition with their military training to a civilian career?

**Response:** Congress should become more involved in ensuring that military training converts into the civilian licensure and credentialing. Oversight over DoD's actions in the training phase of servicemembers would allow Members who undergo military training to receive the same training that would qualify them for their civilian counterpart. In addition, Congress should be willing to allocate funds for programs that DoD could facilitate. Programs that would provide and pay for additional training for all servicemembers who seek to get their civilian licensure and credentials. This needs to be made available for all servicemembers who wish to further their career goal in every branch of the Armed Forces.

**Question 4:** One of the other witnesses writes that future TAP should involve more technology and have an internet component. How should the human interaction fit into a more technology based TAP program?

**Response:** The American Legion realizes that one of the downfalls of the TAP program is servicemembers are preoccupied with their transition needs, such as their family, college and moving. Once they get home, veterans start to realize that they need additional information in order to make their transition as smoothly as possible. With the age of technology, the computer and Internet provide valuable resources for veterans and their families. The American Legion believes that an Internet based resource does solve some of those problems, but does not address all issues. Having the ability to call a case manager at times, or via email, to discuss your transition problems would be a great way to maintain human interaction and still provide a valuable resource.

Thank you for your continued commitment to America's veterans and their families.

Sincerely,

Joseph C. Sharpe, Jr., Director  
*National Economic Commission*

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Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity  
Washington, DC.  
*August 12, 2010*

Thomas Zampieri, Ph.D.  
Director of Government Relations  
Blinded Veterans Association  
477 H Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Dr. Zampieri:

I would like to request your response to the enclosed questions for the record I am submitting in reference to our House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity hearing on *Licensure and Credentialing* on July 29, 2010. Please answer the enclosed hearing questions by no later than Thursday, September 23, 2010.

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Due to the delay in receiving mail, please provide your response to Ms. Orfa Torres by fax at (202) 225-2034. If you have any questions, please call (202) 226-5491.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Herseth Sandlin  
*Chairwoman*

JL/ot

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Blinded Veterans Association  
Washington, DC.  
*September 3, 2010*

The Honorable Stephanie Herseth Sandlin, Chairwoman  
VA Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity  
335 Cannon House Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Herseth Sandlin,

The Blinded Veterans Association appreciates the chance to provide responses to your Committee follow up questions at the VA Subcommittee Economic Opportunity hearing held on July 29, 2010 on Licensure and Credentialing for veterans. Servicemembers transitioning from the military with military occupational training and experience often run into barriers to their being accepted into colleges because of the lack of acceptance of the level of training and experience they have from many universities or community colleges leaving them frustrated and told they must start as freshmen students in many cases.

In regards to the questions sent to BVA we would like to respond to each below:

**Question 1:** Is it the states or the Federal Government that would be best positioned to help veterans with licensure and certification?

**Response:** BVA believes that the Federal Government should leverage the States and academic institutions to improve the educational counseling of veterans to obtain their goals for licensure or credentials to meet employment laws and regulations for occupations. Colleges should be encouraged financially and through educational policy to establish veteran guidance counseling services at all state universities and technical schools.

**Question 2:** What are the key things that Congress can do to help veterans transition with their military training to a civilian career?

**Response:** BVA testimony highlighted that more academic counseling services to analyze and award credit for military training and occupational skills is necessary within military, and current military universities like the Uniformed Health Sciences Academy at Fort Sam Houston TX and the Air Force University, should have pilot funded programs to expand providing servicemembers credit hours for both occupation courses and senior experience and leadership skills. While the DOD AARTS/ SMART Programs provide active duty personnel or veterans of the Army (AARTS) or Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps (SMART) with an official transcript of military training or courses evaluated by American Council on Education (ACE) and 2,300 public colleges do recognize these ACE endorsed transcripts as official documentation of military training, the student veteran must still find the civilian college academic counselor who will match the courses to admission and degree requirements which is lacking on many campuses. This problem could be eliminated by having DOD educational credits provided to the veteran upon discharge.

**Question 3:** If Congress does not have the authority to provide licensure and certification for veterans what should be done?

**Response:** BVA would recommend in addition to the above, that The American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), the Council For Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), and American Council on Education (ACE) in conjunction with State education offices plans for reviewing military occupational skills training and certificates for college credits. Governors have great influence over the state universities in this regard and Federal grants to colleges can be used to encourage participation in these programs.

In addition to the above BVA would urge congress to make changes to improve upon the Chapter 31 Vocational Rehabilitation VR subsistence and housing allowance that are currently lower than the Post-9/11 GI Educational Benefits, and these benefits must be increased to allow service connected disabled veterans the ability to meet the additional costs of attending school.

In addition BVA would encourage the VA Committee to introduce legislation for returning medics and corpsmen to be able to enter into pilot program to assist them in becoming trained as physician assistants. These life savers with emergency medical skills are being lost as vital resource to meeting health care challenges because colleges are not willing to spend time on counseling them and providing them with academic support to enter PA programs.

On behalf of the BVA we again appreciate your leadership on the issue and efforts to improve the employment opportunities for veterans.

Sincerely,

Thomas Zampieri Ph. D.  
*Director of Government Relations*

CC: Congressman John Boozman  
Ranking Member VA Subcommittee

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Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity  
Washington, DC.  
*August 12, 2010*

Mr. Vince Patton, Ed.D.  
Master Chief Petty Officer of the United States Coast Guard (Ret.)  
Director, Community Outreach  
Military.com/Monster Worldwide  
8280 Greensboro Drive  
Suite 700  
McLean, VA 22102

Dear Dr. Patton:

I would like to request your response to the enclosed questions for the record I am submitting in reference to our House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity hearing on *Licensure and Credentialing* on July 29, 2010. Please answer the enclosed hearing questions by no later than Thursday, September 23, 2010.

In an effort to reduce printing costs, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, in cooperation with the Joint Committee on Printing, is implementing some formatting changes for material for all Full Committee and Subcommittee hearings. Therefore, it would be appreciated if you could provide your answers consecutively on letter size paper, single-spaced. In addition, please restate the question in its entirety before the answer.

Due to the delay in receiving mail, please provide your response to Ms. Orfa Torres by fax at (202) 225-2034. If you have any questions, please call (202) 226-5491.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Herseth Sandlin  
*Chairwoman*

JL/ot

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Military Advantage—A *Division of Monster*  
www.military.com  
McLean, VA  
*September 2, 2010*

U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
ATTN: Ms Orfa Torres  
335 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ms Torres:

In response to your letter dated August 12, 2010 referencing questions from Chairwoman Sandlin, I am enclosing the responses to the five questions.

Please do not hesitate to contact me you have any questions either by phone, 703-269-4968, or by email, vince.patton@monster.com.

Sincerely,

Vincent W. Patton, III, Ed.D.  
*Director, Community Outreach*

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**Questions for the Record from the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
 Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity**

***Hearing on Licensure and Credentialing***

**Question 1:** You state that the Transition Assistance Program format does not work. What should be the format for TAP?

**Answer:** The current TAP format consists of a 2½ day workshop that covers a wide array of information that I do feel overall is essential for every transitioning servicemember. The problem is TAP workshops are set up where servicemembers represent a range of career points, be it the end of their first or subsequent enlistments through retirement. As a result attendees for the most part have different immediate needs based on their years of service, type of discharge or reason for leaving the service. TAP covers a basic overview on transitioning information, where most, if not all attendees may require additional information or coaching to address their specific needs.

From an optimal point of view, I would suggest that TAP workshops be identified based on the individual's service tenure (time in service), or whether they are being separated for disability reasons, or retirement. While there still will be a broad range of interest from TAP attendees, by categorizing the workshops, the attendees may fall into a better compressed grouping to address their individual needs. Again, this is optimal, and I do recognize that this cannot be done in all cases because of resource constraints, as well as scheduling issues both for the transitioning servicemember as well as from the workshop facilitators.

**Question 2:** In your testimony, you state that it would be impossible to deliver an effective one size fits all transition program. What would be the basic information that all servicemembers would need when they transition from the military?

**Answer:** As stated in my response to question one, with categorizing TAP workshops by service tenure and types of separation, attendees will still require the same basic information that is offered in TAP classes today: VA benefits, GI Bill/Education, Employment information (resume writing, interviewing skills, and access to employment opportunities), Familiarization of Veteran Service Offices and Military Service Organizations. Also, in addressing employment information besides resume writing, interview skills and how to access employment opportunities via online, employment centers, etc, many transitioning servicemembers need to know more about compensation as well as translation of military to civilian skills. All too often, transitioning servicemembers, especially those who are retiring do not fully understand or comprehend how their skills are assessed when addressing their true economic worth for employment or what their skills translate in civilian terminology.

**Question 3:** Can you explain how Military.com offers a personalized TAP?

**Answer:** Through leveraging technology and the power of the Internet, we created a "Transition Center" ([www.military.com/transition](http://www.military.com/transition)) which addresses the key essential topics that transitioning servicemembers and veterans often ask us as they prepare for their civilian experience. We also learned that military transitioning is something that should be ongoing, where the servicemember who moves on to the status as a military veteran often has a need for immediate recall of information. The information must be current and up-to-date, and allow for the veteran to know where to access certain pieces of information as well as a continuing education process on topics of importance to them.

Our "Transition Center" covers the following topics:

- Veteran Benefits
- Employment Information
- Finding a Mentor
- Resume Writing

- Education
- Financial Information
- Relocation
- Reserve and Guard Options

We personalize this information through feedback from the members on what type of information they have found useful, allowing us to seek articles from subject matter experts and other resources which Members sign up to receive up-to-date informational newsletters periodically. As indicated in my testimony, the Veteran Career Network, or VCN provides our Members with a personal touch by providing them with a Military.com Member who has volunteered to be available as a mentor, assisting any veteran in employment opportunities. The VCN which currently has over one million registered Members (10 percent of Military.com's overall Membership) serves as a fraternal network where veterans connect with each other. This is done in a multitude of ways, some connect because of familiarity with one another, or by service, Military Occupational Specialty (MOS), military unit served, or by interest in the mentor's civilian occupation or place of employment or other professional affiliation. All of these categories are included in the VCN Member's profile. We learned through our interaction with our Members that the social networking applications that we have on Military.com have become useful in allowing veterans to establish contact with one another, even if they have never met before.

**Question 3(a):** Can TAP be personalized only for those seeking employment?

**Answer:** No, TAP can be personalized for more than just those seeking employment. We have also found through our VCN that some mentors signed on to assist other veterans with assistance on access to disability information, or how they have taken advantage of using the GI Bill, or any other matter where the mentor's experience as a user of veteran benefits can be helpful in assisting others. While our VCN is marketed as a career transition tool, we have also noted that connecting with other veterans to share their experiences has reached beyond employment topics.

**Question 3(b):** Do you think this is a good substitute for one-on-one career counseling?

**Answer:** We believe that our VCN serves as a one-on-one counseling resource, as Members are directly connecting with each other. Military.com does maintain the confidentiality of the connections, as the Members connect by sending their personal messages through our secure Military.com messaging system, which is automatically forwarded to the receiver. Neither party in the communication will know each other's email address unless they themselves provide it.

**Question 4:** How does Military.com measure how successful its Web site is compared to Department of Labor's O\*Net Web site?

**Answer:** Military.com's Skills Translator ([www.military.com/skills-translator](http://www.military.com/skills-translator)) success is based on the additional features that are provided beyond the O\*Net's capabilities. While O\*Net provides the interpretive content of civilian occupations that correlates with the MOS, the Military.com Skills Translator also incorporates three additional features allowing the veteran and transitioning job seeker to not only view his or her descriptive MOS skill sets, but also through the key phrases indicated in the translation, corresponds with the over 300,000 monthly job postings that are in the Monster.com (Military.com's parent company) database. This allows the veteran to have a glimpse of what his or her MOS' civilian equivalent jobs are listed, nationwide. This also allows another resource for the veteran to help in fine-tuning his or her resume to ensure that they have the right terminology for the jobs that they are qualified for based on the translation. Our skills translator also generates a separate listing of academic and vocational training offerings, should the job seeker feel that he or she may want to pursue further education in the field of interest that has been designated by the skills translator. This is also helpful for those individuals who may require needed continuing education for the purpose of credentialing and licensure. Finally, the skills translator provides a list of mentors accessible through the VCN, giving the veteran an opportunity to reach out to someone for personal assistance or networking. Our Members have found this to be useful for this one-of-a-kind featured resource in helping those who are seeking employment assistance.

**Question 5:** Are your job fairs for separating servicemembers or for veterans?

**Answer:** Our Military.com Career Fairs ([www.military.com/career-expo](http://www.military.com/career-expo)) are designed for both transitioning servicemembers, veterans, and for military spouses.

We market our events to the entire military community of all ranks: active duty, Reserve/Guard, retirees, veterans and military spouses. We hold 34–40 events around the country each year in partnership with the Noncommissioned Officers Association (NCOA).

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Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity  
Washington, DC.  
*August 12, 2010*

The Honorable Raymond M. Jefferson  
Assistant Secretary, Veterans' Employment and Training Service  
U.S. Department of Labor  
200 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary Jefferson:

I would like to request your response to the enclosed questions for the record and deliverables I am submitting in reference to our House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity hearing on *Licensure and Credentialing* on July 29, 2010. Please answer the enclosed hearing questions by no later than Thursday, September 23, 2010.

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Due to the delay in receiving mail, please provide your response to Ms. Orfa Torres by fax at (202) 225–2034. If you have any questions, please call (202) 226–5491.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Herseth Sandlin  
*Chairwoman*

JL/ot

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**Veterans' Employment and Training Service  
Responses to Questions for the Record and Deliverables from the  
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs,  
Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity July 29, 2010  
Hearing on Licensure and Credentialing**

**Question 1:** Can you elaborate on the national barriers you discovered to the national approach?

**Response:** The national barriers revolve around the decentralization of credentialing in the United States. In many cases, the determination of whether to require and issue a license or certification to practice a profession is made by State and local governments. As a result, the specific requirements for obtaining a particular license or certification can vary greatly from location to location. This prohibits the creation of a nationwide standard, and requires that any licensing effort work on an individual basis with each State or locality that establishes the standards for the credential.

**Question 2:** Has VETS been doing outreach to all the State and local governments to ease the attainment of a license or certification?

**Response:** The Departments of Labor and Defense chartered the DoD-DOL Credentialing Working Group in November 2006 to address the issues of licensing and credentials for Veterans. The efforts of the working group ceased in 2009 before the step of conducting outreach to State and local governments could be reached.

**Question 3:** In a previous hearing on September 20, 2007, the DOL witness said that a Work Group was incorporated under the guidance of Public Law 109–461. The group was to focus on military occupations that comprise a high proportion of existing servicemembers and that can be matched to high demand occupations in high-growth industry. Based on this comment, could you tell us what the end result was?

**Response:** The DOL–DoD Credentialing Working Group worked to identify the 10 major Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) that might require minimal additional training or training adjustments to the curriculum at the service schools. The working group collected data on all MOSs based upon the number of servicemembers in that MOS, and then conducted a cross-walk to high growth civilian occupations.

**Question 3(a):** How many military occupations were matched?

**Response:** Ten MOSs were identified as high density fields that cross walked to high growth industries with minimal additional training or training adjustments to curricula.

**Question 3(b):** Did servicemembers need to re-certify or re-take a licensure test for their civilian occupations once they were matched?

**Response:** Because the working group’s efforts ceased in FY 2009, the step of determining recertification or retaking of exams was never reached.

**Question 4:** In a previous hearing on September 20, 2007, the DOL witness said that the Work Group was incorporated under the guidance of Public Law 109–461 “will assess the instruction used to train servicemembers and contract it to the civilian training that leads to credentialing. Working with the Service Schools and industries, the group will determine what military training is relevant to certification for civilian employers.” Can you please update us on the findings?

**Response:** Because the working group’s efforts ceased in FY 2009, the steps of assessing the instruction used to train servicemembers and determining what military training is relevant to certification for civilian employers was never reached.

**Question 5:** In a previous hearing on September 20, 2007, the DOL witness said “We are currently developing a competitive Solicitation for Grant Applications using available program year 2007 funding that will support a demonstration for one MOS. The program will last for 3 years. We intend to request additional funding in the future years that will allow this single demonstration program to expand to the authorized 10 MOSs.” Can you please update us on the demonstration program?

**Response:** PL 109–461 authorized a demonstration program in the Fiscal Years of 2007 through 2009. No funding was made available to support the program. The Department’s testimony anticipated identifying funding to start a program focusing on one MOS. The intent was to use Veterans’ Workforce Improvement Program (VWIP) funding that was anticipated to become available. Unfortunately, sufficient funding did not become available for this demonstration that year and the demonstration was not conducted.

**Question 5(a):** Which MOS was identified for this program?

**Response:** Since funding was not available, no MOS was selected for a demonstration.

**Question 5(b):** How was it successful and what were the problem areas?

**Response:** A demonstration was not conducted.

**Question 5(c):** Was additional funding requested?

**Response:** The funding for VWIP in FY 2008 was consistent with the level in FY 2007, and therefore was sufficient only to continue the VWIP grants awarded in FY 2007.

**Question 6:** How many veterans have secured jobs in the emerging green jobs sector?

**Response:** In FY 2009 the VWIP program was refocused to concentrate on training and certifying Veterans for jobs on energy efficiency and renewable energy industries:

- Energy-efficient building, construction, and retrofit industries;
- Renewable electric power industry;
- Energy efficient and advanced drive train vehicle industry;
- Bio-fuels industry;
- Deconstruction and materials use industries;
- Energy efficiency assessment industry serving the residential, commercial, or industrial sectors;
- Manufacturers that produce sustainable products using environmentally sustainable processes and materials.

In July 2009, 17 grants were awarded. Through March 31, 2010, 878 Veterans have been placed into employment, and of these, 296 have been placed into jobs related to energy efficiency and renewable energies.

**Question 7:** What can Congress do to support efforts to increase the civilian labor markets acceptance of the occupational training provided by the military?

**Response:** We appreciate the interest of Congress in supporting our efforts to increase the labor market acceptance of MOS training provided by the military. DOL plans to discuss with DoD the possibility of restarting the DOL–DoD Credentialing Working Group. We would expect that there will be opportunities to work with the Congress on this important initiative, and we will keep Congress informed of the progress of this working group and the role that Congress could play as the group determines action steps and further initiatives.

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Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity  
Washington, DC.  
August 12, 2010

Mr. John R. Campbell  
Deputy Under Secretary of Defense  
(Wounded Warrior Care and Transition Policy)  
U.S. Department of Defense  
1400 Defense Pentagon  
Washington DC 20301–1400

Dear Mr. Campbell:

I would like to request your response to the enclosed questions for the record and deliverables I am submitting in reference to our House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity hearing on *Licensure and Credentialing* on July 29, 2010. Please answer the enclosed hearing questions by no later than Thursday, September 23, 2010.

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Sincerely,

Stephanie Herseth Sandlin  
*Chairwoman*

JL/ot

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**Hearing Date: July 29, 2010**  
**Committee: HVA**  
**Member: Congresswoman Herseth Sandlin**  
**Witness: Mr. Campbell**

**Question 1:** In a previous hearing held in 2007, then Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Leslye Arsht stated that as part of the commitment made in the Task Force Report to the President on “Returning Global War on terror Heroes” a special DoD–DOL Credentialing Working Group was in the process of collecting and collating data on all occupational specialties by military service including National Guard and Reserves based on how many people are in each specialty. The Department was to use the outcome of this study to identify adjustments that can be taken within the relevant Service Schools to potentially generate certifications in corresponding private sector jobs. Could you provide us a follow-up on the results and whether the information collected was used to generate certifications in corresponding private sector jobs?

**Answer:** While work was begun on this task through a research contract, it was not completed due to competing demands, reorganization, and funding limitations. I, working with Mr. Jefferson, have directed my staff to reconstitute the DoD–DOL

Credentialing Working Group in order to complete the research to identify the barriers encountered by veterans and transitioning servicemembers regarding various state credentialing and licensing requirements.

Currently, two public Web sites—Navy (<https://www.cool.navy.mil>) and Army (<https://www.cool.army.mil> Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL) Web sites)—already display military occupational specialties, the civilian equivalent occupations, and industry-recognized certifications and licenses for corresponding private sector jobs. Both are free Web sites available to all Military Services, veterans, civilians, academia, and industry.

**Question 2:** Is it possible for the DoD to seek agreements with states to accept military accreditations?

**Answer:** Yes, it is possible for the DoD to seek accreditation agreements with states. However, there is no guarantee that the states would accept military training and experience. Due to the fact that credentialing and licensing requirements vary from state to state and from program to program, this approach would require multiple agreements. A better approach might be for the states to acknowledge military service formal training. The newly constituted working group will explore this and other options as they better define the barriers.

My staff has already begun working with the Defense State Liaison Office (DSLO). Each year the DSLO focuses on top issues to be addressed by states. The DSLO is currently reviewing input and evaluations for 2011 and will have the top 10 initiatives finalized by first quarter of FY2011. One of the proposed issues under consideration is “Acceptance of Military Training and Experience for State Professional Credential Requirements upon Separation from Military Service.” The DSLO and the Office of Wounded Warrior Care and Transition Policy will work collaboratively over the next year to try and get state regulators to accept military trained separating Service members by examination or recognition of their military training certificates.

While it may not be possible to conduct direct negotiations with every individual state for the hundreds of different occupations that they license, a key opportunity for enhancing transitioning servicemembers’ and veterans’ ability to attain state licenses is to encourage states to grant reciprocity. This would enable servicemembers (and their spouses) and veterans who hold a license in one state to be automatically granted licensure in the other states as well. One of the objectives of the joint DoD/DOL Credentialing Working Group is to work with national organizations, such as the National Governor’s Association, the Council on Licensure, Enforcement, and Regulation (CLEAR), and the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCLE) to promote reciprocity for transitioning servicemembers, spouses and veterans.

**Question 3:** Do you believe TAP as the primary platform is meeting the needs of separating servicemembers?

**Answer:** The current Transition Assistance Program (TAP) program, a joint inter-agency program with DOL and VA, has been in place for almost 20 years without any major changes. The Department is in the process of transforming transition assistance from a one time separation event into a continuous process that occurs throughout the military lifecycle. In order to transform TAP, DoD is working with our TAP partners to:

- Transform the culture within DoD so that a servicemember is continually preparing for transition out of the military.
- Provide the recently released “DoD Career Decision Toolkit” to every separating servicemembers leaving active duty, including demobilizing/deactivating National Guard and Reserve. The Toolkit provides transitioning servicemembers with an interactive tool that compliments the current TAP employment workshops.
- In addition to DoD wide initiatives, the Services have also taken important steps to assist their transitioning members. For example:
  - a. The Air Force has recently revised policy to ensure all Airmen are informed of educational opportunities and related financial assistance available while on active duty as well as when they transition to civilian life. The revised policy requires information outreach within 3 months of arrival at every base of assignment; prior to separation/retirement, and least every 3 months between arrival and separation/retirement.
  - b. The Marine Corps is developing an individual TAP road map with special emphasis on education, career and financial management/planning.



**Question 4:** Why is the TAP mandatory for the Marines but not the other military branches?

**Answer:** In order to comply with statute, current DoD-wide policy requires that all separating servicemembers receive pre-separation counseling. This counseling consists of instruction generally known as the “TAP” class. In addition to this core counseling, the Department offers additional elements such as the VA Benefits Briefing, Disabled Transition Assistance Program and the Department of Labor (DOL) TAP Employment Workshops. DoD policy allows the Military Services to exercise their own discretion concerning these additional portions of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) that are not mandated by statute. For example, in the Navy, a sailor may opt out, in writing, of the voluntary DOL TAP Employment Workshop and/or the VA benefits and DoD TAP classes. The Department is in the process of reviewing its TAP policy, in collaboration with our partners at VA and DOL, to make information more widely available throughout the military lifecycle.

**Question 5:** In your testimony you write that licensure and certification information is provided through classroom delivery from an instructor, by online interaction and through one-on-one coaching. Can you elaborate on these elements, and when in a servicemember’s career do they take place?

**Answer:** Information on licensing and certification is disseminated in a number of ways and at various points during a Service member’s career. The mandatory pre-separation counseling session is a direct briefing provided at the end of active duty military service but each Service utilizes a variety of other tools and methods outside of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) to provide such information, including:

- DoD TurboTAP Web site—<http://www.TurboTAP.org>
- DOL ACINET Web site—<http://www.acinet.org>
- Navy COOL Web site—<https://www.cool.navy.mil>
- Army COOL Web site—<https://www.cool.army.mil>
- Air Force CERTS Web site (equivalent to Army and Navy COOL)—<https://augateway.maxwell.af.mil/ccaf/certifications/programs>
- Monster.com Web site—<http://www.monster.com>
- Articles in *GI to Jobs* and other Service-related magazines
- Education Counselors at Base Education Centers

All transitioning servicemembers (Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, demobilizing/deactivating National Guard and Reserves) receive information on licensure, certification, and apprenticeship resources during the mandatory TAP pre-separation counseling. Licensure and certification is a specific required module of the “Pre-separation Counseling Checklist” (DD Form 2648 and DD Form 2648-1). If a servicemember wants additional information, they can request one-on-one counseling assistance provided by a qualified education service officer or counselor.

In addition to the information provided through the required pre-separation counseling, the Military Services provide additional information about education, training and apprenticeship programs and opportunities that are available to servicemembers while on active duty. Initiatives that include licensure and certification information are provided within the Services. For example, Air Force has outreach within 3 months of a servicemembers arrival at every base of assignment and prior to separation/retirement. Navy requires classroom, online, one-one coaching, learning roadmap and targeted briefings. Army requires online and one-on-one counseling.

**Question 6:** What kind of assistance and information do installation experts on licensure and certification provide servicemembers?

**Answer:** Installation experts provide a variety of assistance and information to servicemembers, including:

- Identification of the types of license or certificate required
- Licensure or certification information related to the military occupation code servicemember has been trained in
- Gap analysis between the license or certification and the military occupational code
- Types of funding available for training, education or exams (test) in order to obtain the license or certification
- Approximate length of time to complete a license or certification
- Individual State requirements for licenses
- Information on whether the license or certification is transferable to other states

- Whether the credential is National, International or only applies to that industry on a local basis
- Information on apprenticeship programs
- Information on whether union membership is associated with that credential
- Information on career opportunities in career occupations that require a license or certification

For example:

Navy Command Career Counselors provide information on occupational licensure, certification, and apprenticeship as part of annual career development boards. Each career development board is tailored to the individual Sailor, providing personal and professional goal coaching, recommendations, and Navy expectations. Credentialing is part of each career development board. Learning and Development Roadmaps unique to each rating, provide a list of licenses, certificates and USMAP information to every Sailor at specified times in their careers. The roadmaps are used by the career counselors and are available on Navy Knowledge Online (NKO). In addition, the Navy has Navy COOL—a comprehensive web portal on credentialing that links every Navy rating, job, occupation, and designator to related civilian credentials.

The Air Force has an online tool called Credentialing and Research Tool (CERT) that links the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) degree programs with nationally recognized professional certifications relevant to specific career fields. Within the CCAF catalog, there is a reference to certifications Airmen may pursue while earning a CCAF Associate in Applied Science degree or because of earning that degree.

The Army and Marine Corps provide similar assistance and information through their education, career and transition counselors. The Army also has its own COOL Web site, which is similar in scope to Navy COOL.

**Question 7:** Does the DoD consider the standards provided by the national credentialing boards for military licensure and certifications?

**Answer:** The Department does consider such standards, but DoD training and performance standards are designed to meet specific National Security and DoD requirements and, therefore, civilian industry requirements are not always appropriate. In some cases, such as medical, nuclear, legal, engineering or aviation, the military must comply with the standards set by national credentialing boards.

Some specific examples where national credentialing boards have been explicitly required include:

In the Army and the Air Force, Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) are certified as an EMT Basic using national credentialing board criteria. They are also required to maintain their certification status in order to continue to hold this Military Occupational Specialty. In addition, the Army and Air Force have certified instructors for EMTs and their curriculum meet the U.S. Department of Transportation EMT-Basic National Standard Curriculum (which is a requirement of the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians). The Navy also requires EMT-Basic certification for individuals performing certain jobs. For example, someone performing emergency medical service duties in an emergency room or as an ejection seat trainer.

- Air Traffic Controllers-Servicemembers who operate within an air traffic control tower in the capacity of an Air Traffic Controller must meet FAA credentialing requirements.
- DoD Directive 8570.01: Assurance Credentialing-In recognition of the importance of the need for highly qualified, experienced information assurance personnel, DoD has established a policy requiring certain individuals with privileged access to DoD information systems to obtain civilian credentials. This DoD 8570.1 Directive, made official in August 2004 and implemented according to the requirements of DoD 8570.1-M, *Information Assurance Workforce Improvement Program*, in December 2005, requires any full or part-time military servicemember, contractor, or foreign employee with privileged access to a DoD information system, regardless of job or occupational series, to obtain a commercial information security credential accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). The directive also requires that those same employees maintain their certified status with a certain number of hours of continuing professional education each year. The number of people affected by this mandate is estimated to be 100,000.

**Question 8:** Has DoD given any consideration to having servicemembers secure their civilian credential equivalent to their military credential?

**Answer:** DoD is investigating ways to remove the barriers for servicemembers to secure their civilian credentials equivalent to their military occupational code. Specifically, DoD is:

- Re-constituting the DoD-DOL Credentialing Working Group to complete the work started on identifying the gaps between military occupational codes that could potentially help servicemembers secure their civilian credential equivalent to their military occupation.
- Collaborating with the Defense State Liaison Office to pursue an initiative leading toward acceptance of military training and experience for state professional credential requirements upon separation from military service.
- Leveraging Service Branch approaches and initiatives, such as the COOL Web sites and the United States Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP).

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Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity  
Washington, DC.  
August 12, 2010

Ms. Margarita Cocker  
Deputy Director, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service  
Veterans Benefits Administration  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Ms. Cocker:

I would like to request your response to the enclosed questions for the record and deliverables I am submitting in reference to our House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity hearing on *Licensure and Credentialing* on July 29, 2010. Please answer the enclosed hearing questions by no later than Thursday, September 23, 2010.

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Due to the delay in receiving mail, please provide your response to Ms. Orfa Torres by fax at (202) 225-2034. If you have any questions, please call (202) 226-5491.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Herseth Sandlin  
*Chairwoman*

JL/ot

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**Questions for the Record**  
**The Honorable Chairwoman Stephanie Herseth Sandlin**  
**House Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity**  
**House Committee on Veteran's Affairs**  
**Hearing on Licensure and Credentialing**  
**July 29, 2010**

**Question 1:** How long would a servicemember or veteran with severe injuries take to complete leading-edge certifications, which you mentioned in your written testimony?

**Response:** The length of time to complete a certification varies depending on the type of certification the Veteran is pursuing. Computer certifications may be completed within 6 months once training requirements are met. Other certification programs, such as Certified Nursing Assistant, may take up to two or more years to complete the training requirements and the certification exam. Rehabilitation plans are written to reflect the approximate length of time to complete the program agreed upon by the Veteran and counselor. Tutoring and other assistance is provided to the Veteran if needed during the training and certification period to enable successful completion of their rehabilitation plan and meet their job goals.

**Question 2:** How long does it take to do transferable skills assessment and is there a cost associated with it?

**Response:** A transferable skill analysis (TSA) is a systematic application of logic to determine what types of employment a person's previous experience relates to, or to which it can transfer. A rehabilitation counselor can perform an informal transferable skill analysis by reviewing the Veteran's prior employment and educational history. Comparing this information to the information obtained in the Department of Labor's O\*Net online tool, the counselor can determine which occupations would best maximize the use of skills the Veteran acquired in his or her past experience. The counselor must also determine which of the occupations would be consistent with the Veteran's capabilities and aptitudes.

Conducting a TSA does not impose a delay in the processing and development of a plan of services. The analysis itself can be completed in less than a few hours depending on the complexity of the Veteran's background and disability conditions. Once the skills are identified and a job goal is selected, continued development of the plan occurs until all services are identified that will enable the Veteran to reach his/her goals. In many cases, counselors use the O\*Net, which is a free online resource. Additional TSA tools, purchased by the VA on a case-by-case basis, range in cost from \$18 to \$100.

**Question 3:** How different are the challenges for a disabled veteran versus a non-disabled veteran?

**Response:** Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Service provides service to only disabled Veterans with at least a 10 percent disability rating or higher. Veterans with disabilities have increased employment barriers when returning from active duty. Veterans returning with disabilities have to meet the same certification and licensing requirements as Veterans without disabilities, however they may need additional supportive services to ensure their success. For example, Veterans with disabilities may need special accommodations in the classroom or testing environment.

**Question 4:** Can you specify what kind of licensing and credentialing assistance does the VA provide?

**Response:** Certifications and licenses approved for Veterans include, but are not limited to the following: information technology, nursing, dental assisting, teaching, counseling, truck driving, and other technical fields. Under the VR&E program, licensing and credentialing costs are paid for Veterans who have a signed rehabilitation plan in place requiring a license or certification to become suitably employed. State licensing and certification programs vary from state to state, and each VA counselor must keep apprised of changes in certification and licensure requirements.

**Question 5:** How many veterans did the Veterans Rehabilitation and Employment program help last year secure a license or certification?

**Response:** VR&E does not track the number of certifications and licenses obtained by Veterans each year. Occupational categories are tracked and reported in the Annual Benefits Report. VA rehabilitated 8,213 Veterans into suitable employment during fiscal year 2009. While not all 8,213 Veterans were required to be licensed or certified in their trade, these Veterans were provided support to complete training and credentialing requirements for their specific occupational field.

