

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 856

To reauthorize the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011, to provide assistance to small businesses owned by veterans, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 3, 2017

Mr. COHEN (for himself, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. BORDALLO, Ms. NORTON, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. MCGOVERN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on Armed Services, Oversight and Government Reform, the Judiciary, and Science, Space, and Technology, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To reauthorize the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011, to provide assistance to small businesses owned by veterans, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
5 “Putting Our Veterans Back to Work Act of 2017”.

1 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for
 2 this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—RENEWING OUR VOW TO HIRE HEROES

Sec. 101. Reauthorization of veterans retraining assistance program.

Sec. 102. Extension of authority of Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide rehabilitation and vocational benefits to members of Armed Forces with severe injuries or illnesses.

Sec. 103. Extension of additional rehabilitation programs for persons who have exhausted rights to unemployment benefits under State law.

Sec. 104. Reauthorization of collaborative veterans’ training, mentoring, and placement program.

TITLE II—BUILDING ON OUR VOW TO HIRE HEROES

Sec. 201. Unified employment portal for veterans.

Sec. 202. Grants to hire veterans as first responders.

Sec. 203. Employment of veterans as evaluation factor in the awarding of Federal contracts.

3 **TITLE I—RENEWING OUR VOW** 4 **TO HIRE HEROES**

5 **SEC. 101. REAUTHORIZATION OF VETERANS RETRAINING** 6 **ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.**

7 (a) EXTENSION.—Subsection (k) of section 211 of
 8 the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 (Public Law 112–
 9 56; 38 U.S.C. 4100 note) is amended by striking “March
 10 31, 2014” and inserting “December 31, 2020”.

11 (b) NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE VETERANS.—Subsection
 12 (a)(2) of such section is amended—

13 (1) in subparagraph (A), by striking “and” at
 14 the end;

15 (2) in subparagraph (B), by striking the period
 16 at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

1 (3) by adding at the end the following new sub-
2 paragraphs:

3 “(C) 50,000 during fiscal year 2017;

4 “(D) 50,000 during fiscal year 2018;

5 “(E) 50,000 during fiscal year 2019; and

6 “(F) 50,000 during the period beginning
7 October 1, 2019, and ending December 31,
8 2020.”.

9 (c) CLARIFICATION OF LIMITATION ON AGGREGATE
10 AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE.—Subsection (b) of such section
11 is amended by striking “up to 12 months of retraining
12 assistance provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs”
13 and inserting “an aggregate of not more than 12 months
14 of retraining assistance provided by the Secretary of Vet-
15 erans Affairs under this section”.

16 (d) UPDATED REPORT.—Subsection (i) of such sec-
17 tion is amended by adding at the end the following new
18 paragraph:

19 “(3) UPDATE.—Not later than December 31,
20 2021, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in collabo-
21 ration with the Secretary of Labor, shall submit to
22 the appropriate committees of Congress an update
23 to the report described in paragraph (1).”.

1 (e) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Subsection
 2 (e)(1)(G) of such section is amended by striking “by not
 3 later than October 1, 2013,”.

4 **SEC. 102. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY OF SECRETARY OF**
 5 **VETERANS AFFAIRS TO PROVIDE REHABILI-**
 6 **TATION AND VOCATIONAL BENEFITS TO**
 7 **MEMBERS OF ARMED FORCES WITH SEVERE**
 8 **INJURIES OR ILLNESSES.**

9 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1631(b)(2) of the Wound-
 10 ed Warrior Act (title XVI of Public Law 110–181; 10
 11 U.S.C. 1071 note) is amended by striking “December 31,
 12 2017” and inserting “December 31, 2020”.

13 (b) REPORT.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days
 15 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
 16 retary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the appro-
 17 priate committees of Congress a report on the bene-
 18 fits provided by the Secretary under section 1631(b)
 19 of such Act.

20 (2) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CON-
 21 GRESS.—In this subsection, the term “appropriate
 22 committees of Congress” means—

23 (A) the Committee on Armed Services and
 24 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Sen-
 25 ate; and

1 (B) the Committee on Armed Services and
2 the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the
3 House of Representatives.

4 **SEC. 103. EXTENSION OF ADDITIONAL REHABILITATION**
5 **PROGRAMS FOR PERSONS WHO HAVE EX-**
6 **HAUSTED RIGHTS TO UNEMPLOYMENT BENE-**
7 **FITS UNDER STATE LAW.**

8 Section 3102(b)(4) of title 38, United States Code,
9 is amended by striking “March 31, 2014” and inserting
10 “March 31, 2020”.

11 **SEC. 104. REAUTHORIZATION OF COLLABORATIVE VET-**
12 **ERANS' TRAINING, MENTORING, AND PLACE-**
13 **MENT PROGRAM.**

14 Subsection (e) of section 4104A of title 38, United
15 States Code, is amended to read as follows:

16 “(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
17 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
18 amounts as follows:

19 “(1) \$4,500,000 for the period consisting of fis-
20 cal years 2018 and 2019.

21 “(2) \$4,500,000 for the period consisting of fis-
22 cal years 2020 and 2021.”.

TITLE II—BUILDING ON OUR VOW TO HIRE HEROES

SEC. 201. UNIFIED EMPLOYMENT PORTAL FOR VETERANS.

Section 4105 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(c)(1) The Secretary shall develop a single, unified Federal web-based employment portal, for use by veterans, containing information regarding all Federal programs and activities concerning employment, unemployment, and training to the extent the programs and activities affect veterans.

“(2) The Secretary shall work with representatives from the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Small Business Administration, and other Federal agencies and organizations concerned with veterans’ issues, to determine an appropriate platform and implementing agency for the portal. The Secretary shall enter into an agreement with the other Federal agencies for the implementation of the portal.”.

SEC. 202. GRANTS TO HIRE VETERANS AS FIRST RESPONDERS.

(a) GRANTS FOR FIREFIGHTERS.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall award grants under section 34 of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2229a) to hire veterans as firefighters.

1 (b) GRANTS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS.—

2 The Attorney General shall award grants under part Q
3 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets
4 Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796dd et seq.) to hire veterans
5 as law enforcement officers.

6 (c) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under this sec-
7 tion to hire veterans, the Secretary of Homeland Security
8 and the Attorney General shall give priority to the hiring
9 of veterans who served on active duty in the Armed Forces
10 on or after September 11, 2001.

11 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
12 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
13 \$250,000,000.

14 **SEC. 203. EMPLOYMENT OF VETERANS AS EVALUATION**
15 **FACTOR IN THE AWARDING OF FEDERAL**
16 **CONTRACTS.**

17 (a) CIVILIAN CONTRACTS.—

18 (1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 33 of title 41,
19 United States Code, is amended by adding at the
20 end the following new section:

21 **“§ 3313. Employment of veterans as evaluation factor**

22 “The head of each executive agency shall consider fa-
23 vorably as an evaluation factor in solicitations for con-
24 tracts and task or delivery order valued at or above
25 \$25,000,000 the employment by a prospective contractor

1 of veterans constituting at least 5 percent of the contrac-
 2 tor’s workforce.”.

3 (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-
 4 tions at the beginning of such chapter is amended
 5 by adding after the item relating to section 3312 the
 6 following new item:

“3313. Employment of veterans as evaluation factor.”.

7 (b) DEFENSE CONTRACTS.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 137 of title 10,
 9 United States Code, is amended by adding at the
 10 end the following new section:

11 **“§ 2338. Employment of veterans as evaluation factor**

12 “The head of each agency shall consider favorably as
 13 an evaluation factor in solicitations for contracts and task
 14 or delivery order valued at or above \$25,000,000 the em-
 15 ployment by a prospective contractor of veterans consti-
 16 tuting at least five percent of the contractor’s workforce.”.

17 (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-
 18 tions at the beginning of such chapter is amended
 19 by adding after the item relating to section 2337 the
 20 following new item:

“2338. Employment of veterans as evaluation factor.”.

21 (c) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 180 days after
 22 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Federal Acquisi-
 23 tion Regulatory Council shall amend the Federal Acquisi-
 24 tion Regulation to carry out the provisions of section 3313

1 of title 41, United States Code, and section 2338 of title
2 10, United States Code, as added by subsections (a) and
3 (b), respectively.

