

VFW Wants Veterans Corp. Shut Down

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WASHINGTON — The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. is calling on Congress to stop appropriating federal funding for the Veterans Business Development Corporation, which is better known as The Veterans Corporation, or TVC.

Congress created TVC in 1999 to provide military veterans with the resources and guidance necessary to start small businesses, but an investigation report released yesterday by the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship revealed that TVC failed to achieve its goals.

According to the bipartisan report by committee chairman John Kerry (D-Mass.) and ranking member Olympia Snowe (R-Maine), TVC failed to establish and maintain veterans business resource centers, it didn't become self-sufficient as required, and the use of federal funding for executive compensation and questionable expenditures was deemed unacceptable.

The Senate committee recommended that TVC no longer receive any federal funding for fiscal 2009 and beyond. The VFW national commander agrees.

"This is a prime example of a good government initiative that went bad," said Glen M. Gardner, Jr., a Vietnam veteran from Round Rock, Texas. "Without proper oversight, TVC management had their way with \$17 million in taxpayer funding over the past seven years. That has to stop and TVC needs to be shut down."

The VFW wants TVC's funding redirected to expand veteran-specific programs within the Small Business Administration, and for the federal government to incorporate TVC business centers into its Veterans Business Outreach Center network. The Small Business Administration, unlike TVC, is subject to congressional oversight and accountability, and with 1,500 small business development centers across the country, it is more capable of reaching out and working with veterans.

"The Small Business Administration is the right place for Congress to fund and expand small business programs for veterans," said Gardner. "It has a proven track record and provides greater bang for the buck."

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