



VFW Urges Passage of Veterans Jobs Bill

Corporate America the key to stemming rampant unemployment rate

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WASHINGTON — The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. is backing legislation introduced today by Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) to create a veterans jobs bill to help ease the rampant unemployment rate among Iraq and Afghanistan veterans.

"The nation's economy is showing signs of improvement, but the unemployment rate of current war veterans is accelerating in the wrong direction," said VFW National Commander Thomas J. Tradewell Sr., of Sussex, Wis. "We believe Senator Murray's bill will help address many of those concerns and impediments to employment."

According to the Department of Labor, there are more than 1.1 million unemployed veterans, a quarter-million of whom are Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, with unemployment rates of 30.2 percent for age 24 and younger, and 17.9 percent for ages 25 to 34. The national unemployment average is just below 10 percent.

In testimony last week before the House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, the VFW said Washington cannot solve the veterans' unemployment epidemic alone, but Washington can — and must — do a better job of selling veterans to corporate America.

"The federal government must become a veteran's greatest cheerleader," said Tradewell, who is very supportive of Murray's bill to expand counseling, training and placement services, as well as entrepreneurial opportunities, because "veterans hire veterans."

The VFW also wants federal incentives increased to entice more businesses to hire more veterans.

One such incentive, for example, would be to double the \$2,400 and \$4,800 Work

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Opportunity Tax Credit for businesses who hire veterans and disabled veterans, respectively, as well as eliminate the program's five-year window that currently excludes 765,000 unemployed veterans from being eligible.

In addition, the VFW national commander wants America's veterans who are in the corporate world to use their veteran status as a bully pulpit to push "Veterans First" in boardrooms across the country.

"A young platoon sergeant or lieutenant is in a foreign country right now helping a small community get back on its feet — and they are doing it in a different language and armed primarily with the common sense in their head and the people skills they learned in the military. Just imagine what that can-do attitude could bring to America's business community if just given a chance," said Tradewell.

"Our greatest generation returned home from World War II to become the scientists, scholars and captains of industry who led our nation's tremendous era of growth in the second half of the 20th century. That is exactly what America's newest greatest generation is capable of, and it all begins with one job and one employer who believes that those we entrust to protect our nation can also be trusted to run their companies."