President Announces New Job Initiatives for Vets

Law makes it easier for veterans to find jobs using skills acquired in the military

Jul 24, 2012

Pesident Barack Obama addressed about 3,500 attendees at today's Joint Opening Session in the Reno-Sparks Convention Center. He discussed various issues of importance to veterans, including: new employment and transition assistance for returning vets, VA health care, the *Post-9/11 GI Bill*, the Afghanistan War and creation of a medals database.

Obama announced that earlier in the morning he had signed into law the *Veteran Skills to Jobs Act* (*H.R. 4155*), sponsored by Rep. Jeff Denham (R-Calif.). The law will make it easier for veterans to find jobs using skills acquired in the military by streamlining the certification process. "Veterans need to be licensed and credentialed when they get home," he said.
Obama also told attendees that he hopes that Congress will pass the *Veterans Job Corps Act* (*H.R. 5683)*, which would offer unemployed veterans or their widows or widowers jobs in forestry, for example, on public lands.

In order to prepare veterans for civilian life, Obama introduced a major interagency overhaul of the military's transition assistance program called Transition GPS. "We're going to set up a reverse boot camp" to enhance "career readiness," he said. It would extend sessions up to seven days, to include financial planning, an employment workshop and a planning session in which troops can explore career options and talk to experts. The redesigned program should be complete by the end of 2013.

Obama covered several matters regarding VA health care, including the idea of vouchers. "Some have argued for [vouchers], but I could not disagree more," Obama said to applause. "You don't need vouchers, you need the VA care you have earned." He vowed to continue to make veterans health care a priority.

For veterans interested in going to college upon discharge, Obama noted that he signed an executive order to halt for-profit schools from targeting recipients of *Post-9/11 GI Bill*

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE
200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
Office 202.543.2239
Fax 202.543.6719
info@vfw.org
www.vfw.org

benefits. The order, signed in April, came in response to reports of "aggressive and deceptive" practices by some schools.

On the subject of the Afghanistan War, Obama said more than 30,000 U.S. troops will be home by the end of summer and the transition to Afghan control will be complete in 2014.

To protect the military's most prestigious medals, Obama announced a new Pentagon website—"a living memorial"—this week that lists valid awardees, "because no American hero should ever have his valor stolen." This step was in response to the Supreme Court recently overturning the *Stolen Valor Act*.

In concluding his 32-minute speech, Obama said: "We have a solemn obligation to all who serve—not just for the years you're in uniform, but for all the decades that follow."