

# Economic Nuggets

December 17, 2021

*The latest news, views, and announcements*

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## National Veterans Employment & Education Commission Newsletter



### VE&E'S LATEST ANNOUNCEMENT

Attention Veterans  
We Are Here For YOU!!



**Veteran Virtual Kiosk**

- ◆ MD Workforce Exchange Assistance
- ◆ Employment Services for Jobseekers
- ◆ Career Guidance & Training Opportunities
- ◆ Resource Connections—Eliminating Barriers To Employment

**“If there was a way to get immediate help with your job search, support needs, or career goals from fellow veterans who are employment professionals, would you use it?”**

**We thought so!**

**Maryland’s Veteran Virtual Kiosk** is a NEW outreach effort provided under the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) program. It’s available to any resident veteran, eligible family member, or caregiver to get answers to questions and help eliminate the issues which keep you from obtaining the job or career you deserve. Regardless of where you live, simply log-in or call and our highly trained veterans will be ready to listen, relate, and work with you to remove any barriers to employment.

Need access to quality jobs? Need skill training? Need resources for you and your family?  
**We can help. All you have to do is take that next step and contact us today!**

**Monday - Friday from 10am - 3pm EST**  
**VIRTUAL - <https://meet.google.com/awf-yoqx-mmu>**  
**PHONE - +1 516-268-6742 PIN: 748 066 507 #**



## ECONOMY

*During the Covid-19 pandemic, economists' estimates for job growth have often been off by hundreds of thousands of jobs.*

*(Photo: Justin Lane/Epa/Shutterstock)*

### WHY U.S. JOB GAINS ARE SO HARD TO COUNT DURING COVID-19

*Government gets less data from employers, and economists have a hard time understanding how the pandemic affects consumer, business behavior*

The [monthly U.S. jobs report](#) moves trillions of dollars in market trades and influences key policy decisions such as the Federal Reserve's interest-rate plans.

But during the Covid-19 pandemic, economists have had an especially hard time predicting the report's headline number of jobs added. Meanwhile, the government itself has routinely made big revisions to its initial estimates.

Why? Two big reasons. Economists have struggled to guess the behavior of consumers and companies during unprecedented government stimulus, labor-market shifts and virus fears. Second, the government has seen a sharp decline in the payroll data it collects from employers.

During one of the most volatile periods in recent memory, private and public-sector economists

have a less firm grasp of what the labor market is doing.

During the pandemic, economists' estimates for job growth have often been off by hundreds of thousands of jobs. So far this year, for instance, economists' estimates have cumulatively surpassed the government's initial reports by about 1.3 million jobs.

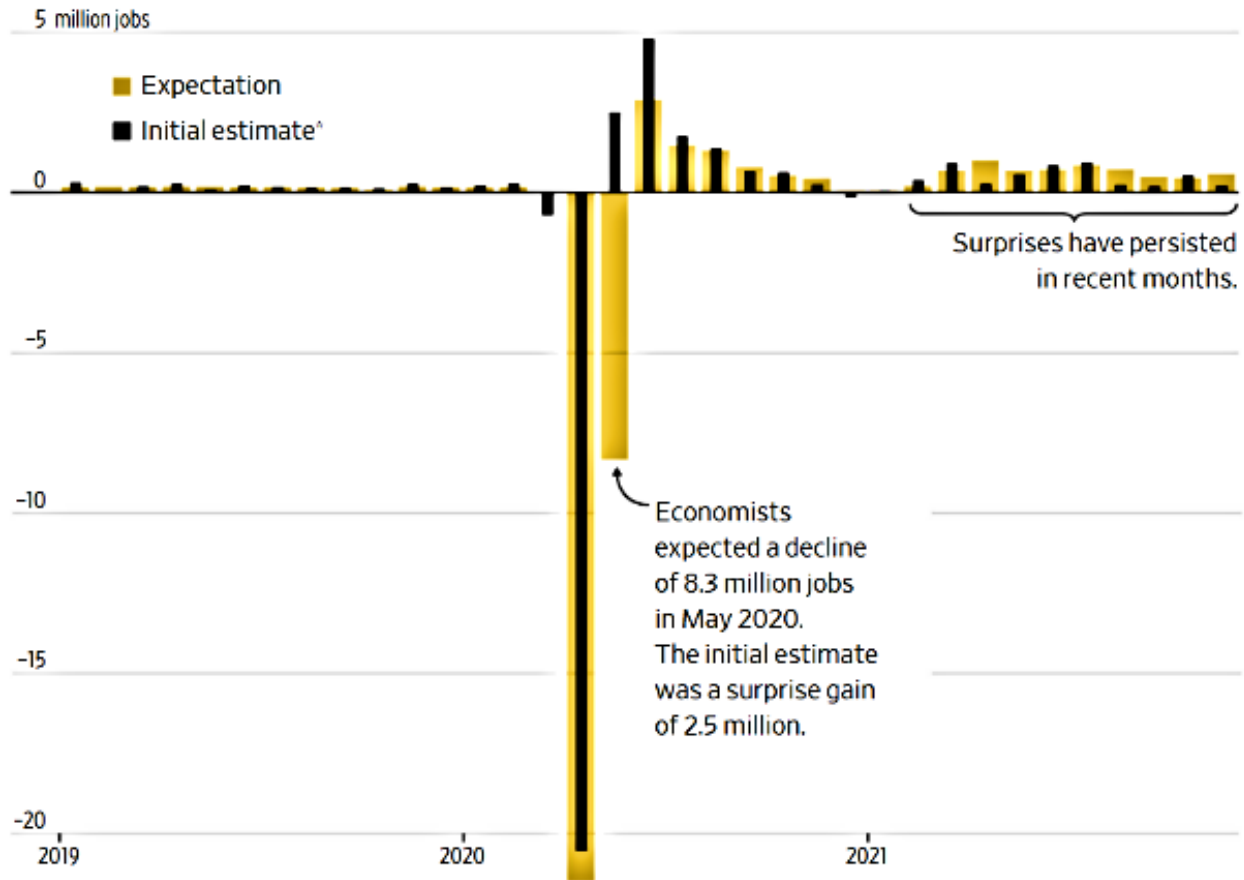
In the days leading to the report on November payrolls, economists surveyed by The Wall Street Journal believed employers added 573,000 jobs that month. The Bureau of Labor Statistics said the actual number was 210,000, and it added 82,000 more jobs to its initial October payrolls estimate for a new total of 546,000.

Even in normal times, predicting job growth is hard. For one, the jobs report, typically released on the first Friday of each month, is one of the

first glimpses of economic activity the government offers.

ascertain how quickly businesses would reopen and consumers would return to restaurants and stores. This summer's Delta variant added uncertainty about whether employers would cut jobs.

**Monthly change in nonfarm payrolls, economists' expectations and as reported**



\*Seasonally adjusted

Sources: Labor Department (reported); Wall Street Journal Weekly Economists Survey (expectations)

A second reason: the sheer size of the labor market, currently 149 million jobs. A forecast off the mark by 200,000 qualifies as a big miss. But as a percent of overall jobs, it is a rounding error. For November, the median economist forecast was off by 363,000 jobs added, which represented 0.2% of total U.S. payrolls.

The pandemic has added uncertainties. Congress sent households trillions of dollars in stimulus payments and enhanced unemployment benefits. Forecasters were caught off guard by how quickly consumers spent that money, much of it on goods. Economists also struggled to

The government has far more data than private-sector economists do. But even its estimates have been far off.

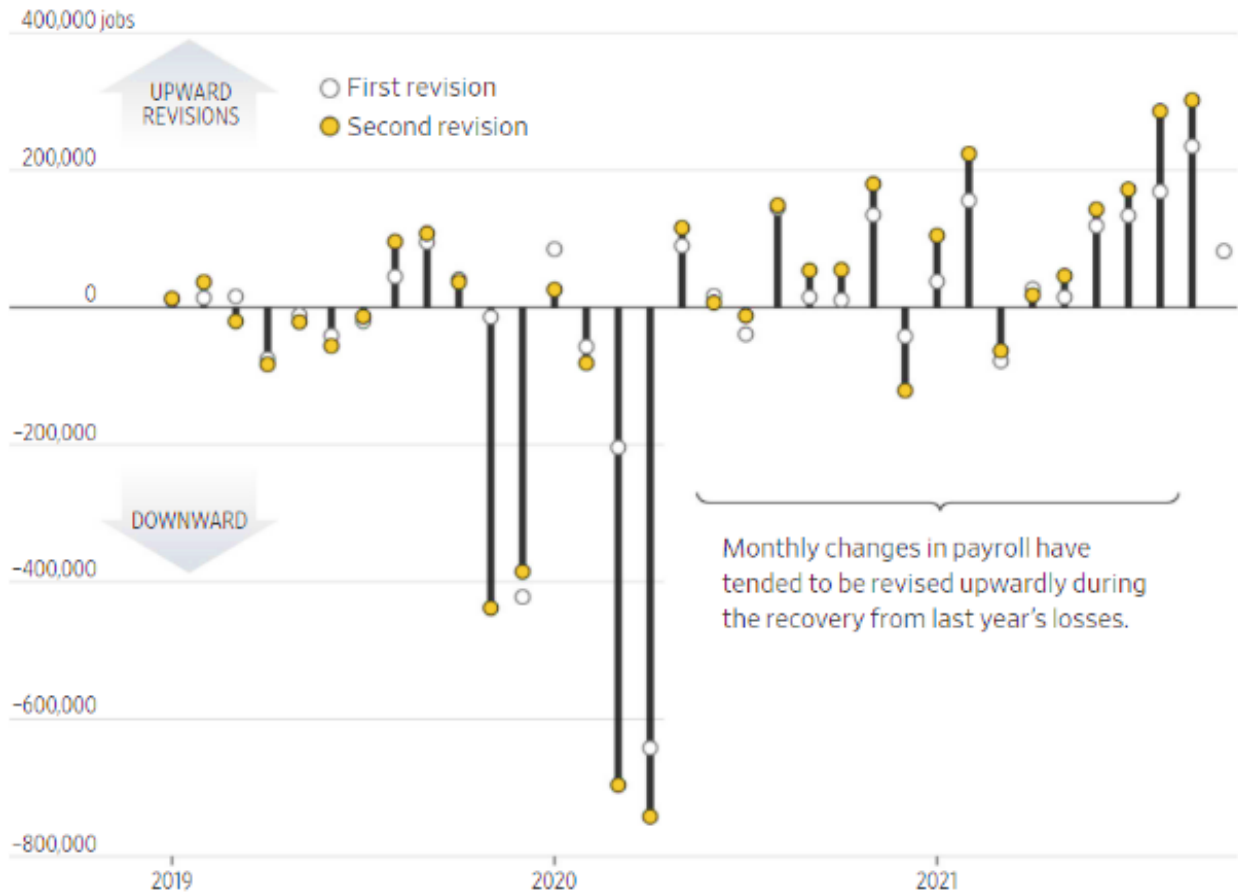
BLS surveys about 145,000 employers in the middle of every month and produces an initial estimate that makes up the headline payrolls number of the jobs report. The agency subsequently provides two revisions to that estimate, as it collects more survey responses.

In any given month, many employers respond to the survey late or not at all. The BLS says its big revisions reflect a sharp drop in survey

respondents during the pandemic, as often happens during times of economic turmoil. The response rate fell from 59% in February 2020 to 45% last month, BLS data show.

Groshen said. When the agency finally collects their responses, it incorporates them into new estimates, leading to big revisions.

**Monthly change in nonfarm payroll, size of revision from the initial estimate\***



\*Seasonally adjusted  
Source: Labor Department

“You’re now asking companies to pony up economic data when they themselves are struggling to keep in business,” said Georgetown University professor Keith Hall, former head of the BLS. In many cases employees who fill out the questionnaire are preoccupied with other tasks or have been laid off.

When businesses don’t respond, the agency must guess their payroll size, said Cornell University’s Erica Groshen, who also previously headed the BLS. Often late survey responders are “biased” in one direction—they hired or fired en masse, Ms.

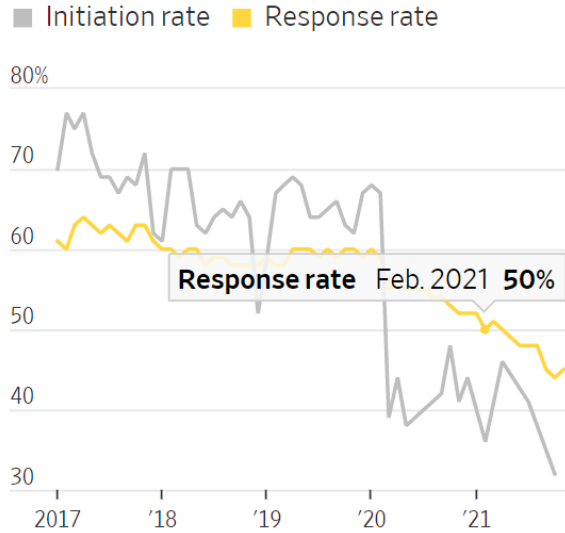
The BLS also routinely reaches out to new companies to join the survey sample, to keep up with changes in the types and size of companies that constitute the labor force. There, too, the agency has run into trouble. The share of companies agreeing to be surveyed—the so-called “initiation rate”—has fallen by half over the pandemic to 32% in October. This has led to a smaller sample size, which has likely led to more “noise,” or bigger swings in estimates and re-estimates, Ms. Groshen said. “As your sample decreases, even if it’s representative, you’re

going to get more random variation because you don't have everybody in it," she said.

### Response Slide

Fewer businesses are participating in and responding to Bureau of Labor Statistics surveys on hiring.

#### Current Employment Statistics survey



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Then there is seasonal adjustment. The BLS tweaks the raw survey data to account for seasonal patterns of hiring, such as when retailers boost hiring for the holidays.

The pandemic disrupted those seasonal patterns. It led to the mass closure of schools.

Households shifted spending to goods from services, and to online from physical stores. Retailers likely reduced staffing at in-person stores, said Stephen Stanley, chief economist at analytics firm Amherst Pierpont. The shift may have affected retail employment in November, typically a big month for hiring.

The BLS reported that retailers cut 20,400 jobs in November, after accounting for seasonal factors. Without adjustments, the industry added 331,600 jobs.

Seasonal effects also caused November's overall employment figure to look weak. Without adjustments, the economy added 778,000 jobs, the largest non-seasonally adjusted gain in any November on records dating from 1939.

"The evolution of the structure of the economy has accelerated because of the pandemic," Mr. Stanley said. He believes part of the problem is the labor shortage, which has prevented many businesses from hiring in months that typically include big job gains.

*Mitchell, J., DeBarros, A., & Barnett, A. (2021, December 13). Why U.S. job gains are so hard to count during covid-19. The Wall Street Journal. Retrieved December 14, 2021, from [https://www.wsj.com/articles/why-u-s-job-gains-are-so-hard-to-count-during-covid-19-11639391408?mod=Searchresults\\_pos13&page=2](https://www.wsj.com/articles/why-u-s-job-gains-are-so-hard-to-count-during-covid-19-11639391408?mod=Searchresults_pos13&page=2)*

# ECONOMIC NEWS RELEASE

- The national unemployment rate is **4.2 percent** (November 2021)
- Gulf War II veterans' unemployment rate is **4.3 percent** (November 2021)
- Gulf War II women veterans' unemployment rate is **3.6 percent** (November 2021)



- In November 2021, the veteran unemployment rate was **3.9%**, down from **4.2%** the previous month. The comparable non-veteran unemployment rate was **4.2%** in November.
- Newly discharged veterans claiming benefits totaled **5,101** an increase of **264** from the preceding week

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**HOUSEHOLD DATA**

**Table A-5. Employment status of the civilian population 18 years and over by veteran status, period of service, and sex, not seasonally adjusted**

*[Numbers in thousands]*

Employment status, veteran status, and period of service	Total		Men		Women	
	Nov. 2020	Nov. 2021	Nov. 2020	Nov. 2021	Nov. 2020	Nov. 2021
<b>Unemployed</b>	552	327	492	281	60	46
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	6.3	3.9	6.4	3.9	5.3	4.0

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## EMPLOYMENT & TRANSITION

### VETERAN'S CASE BRINGS WAR POWERS TO SUPREME COURT

The Supreme Court will decide whether Congress can give military service members the right to file civil lawsuits against states for employment discrimination based on their military service, in a case about how much power lawmakers have regarding military forces.

The justices announced Wednesday they will hear a lawsuit filed by Le Roy Torres, a state trooper for the Texas Department of Public Safety who returned from active duty with the Army Reserve in Iraq with lung damage from toxic burn pits.

Torres says the department declined his request for reemployment in a different position because his constrictive bronchiolitis prevented him from performing his duties as a state trooper. He resigned, and then filed a lawsuit against Texas in

2017 under a federal law that clarified and strengthened veterans' employment and reemployment rights after the Persian Gulf War.

But a Texas state appeals court ruled that Congress can't give service members the right to file such a lawsuit when a state hasn't given its permission for that to happen — the latest state to reach that same conclusion based on the longstanding doctrine of state sovereign immunity.

Virginia, Florida, Tennessee, Georgia, Delaware and Alabama also have state court decisions that prevent hundreds of thousands of veterans who are state employees from using the best remedy Congress created in a broader effort to help encourage military service, the petition from Torres states.

“State courts nationwide are systematically disregarding a federal law that Congress concluded was necessary for the national defense,” Torres states in his petition to the Supreme Court.

Torres argues those decisions step on Congress’ broad and sweeping powers to raise and support military forces, known as the War Powers. The United States has made that same argument in cases that led to those state court decisions, saying that recruitment is central to those powers.

“That conclusion not only interferes with Congress’ ability to provide for the national defense today, but it may interfere with Congress’s ability to exercise its War Powers in the future, in a time of dire national need,” Torres’s petition states.



The law, known as the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, or USERRA, establishes broad protections, including the right to take military leave from civilian jobs, to be promptly reemployed upon return from service, and to be free from discrimination based on military service, the Torres petition states.

It also requires employers to make reasonable efforts to accommodate those who incur disabilities during their military service and to rehire them in the position they would have held but for their military service or an equal position of seniority, status and pay.

When the Supreme Court ruled in 1996 that Congress does not have the power to subject state governments to lawsuits in federal court, Congress responded in 1998 with a law that expressly authorized these lawsuits against state employers in state courts.

The case asks the Supreme Court to delve into the text and history of the Constitution, and whether states consented to War Powers lawsuits at the time of the founding, as well as a history of Supreme Court decisions about under what circumstances Congress can allow lawsuits against states.

The issue has been percolating in lower courts for years. The Supreme Court declined to hear a similar case in 2017. And the United States had urged the justices to take the same path this time and not decide the case, in part because Congress has considered legislation that would require states to waive sovereign immunity in these lawsuits before being eligible for federal funding.

In Tennessee, when a state court held that sovereign immunity barred these lawsuits, the legislature enacted a statute that waived sovereign immunity in these cases, the United States wrote in its filing in the Torres case.

Texas, in its filing in the case, told the Supreme Court that cases of states discriminating against service members “are vanishingly rare,” and Torres has an administrative process and other ways to pursue a discrimination claim that he chose not to use.

Torres suffered lung damage after being exposed to toxic fumes emanating from the huge open-air burn pits that spouted thick, black smoke 24 hours a day on many military bases as they burned trash, ammunition, medicine and human waste, his petition states.

Texas offered him a temporary position as a state trooper and said he would be fired if he did not report to duty, according to the petition. Torres resigned, and along with his wife, Rosie, started a nonprofit organization called Burn Pits 360 to advocate for service members and families injured by the toxic burn pits.

Through [Resolution No. 85: Support Employment and Reemployment Rights of National Guard and Reservists Returning from Deployment](#), The American Legion urges The Supreme Court to consider ruling in favor of the plaintiff, making an exception to state



sovereign immunity when it comes to upholding the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA) protections and rights for servicemembers.

*RUGER, T. O. D. D. R. U. G. E. R. (2021, December 15). Veteran's case brings war powers to Supreme Court. NNY360. Retrieved December 16, 2021, from [https://www.nny360.com/news/veteran-s-case-brings-war-powers-to-supreme-court/article\\_855f414f-395a-5071-864d-e9bfa4a940b0.html](https://www.nny360.com/news/veteran-s-case-brings-war-powers-to-supreme-court/article_855f414f-395a-5071-864d-e9bfa4a940b0.html)*

## THE BIDEN-HARRIS ADMINISTRATION TRUCKING ACTION PLAN TO STRENGTHEN AMERICA'S TRUCKING WORKFORCE

Trucking plays a critical role in the U.S. supply chain and economy. America's truck drivers have been on the frontlines of this pandemic, delivering goods to every corner of this country. Seventy-two percent of goods in America are shipped by truck, and in most communities, trucks are the only form of delivery. A strong, stable, and safe trucking workforce that offers good-paying jobs to millions of truck drivers is a critical lifeblood of our economy. But outdated infrastructure, the COVID-19 pandemic, and a historic volume of goods moving through our economy have strained capacity across the supply chain, including in trucking.



The pandemic exacerbated longstanding workforce challenges in the trucking industry, including high turnover rates, an aging workforce, long hours away from home, and time spent waiting—often unpaid—to load and unload at congested ports, warehouses, and distribution centers. According to one estimate, long-haul full-truckload drivers only spend an average of 6.5 hours per working day driving despite being allowed to drive a maximum of 11 hours. That means about 40 percent of their capacity is not being used. Many truckers also bear the burden of gas, insurance, and maintenance costs, which reduces their take home pay, creating significant challenges in recruiting and retaining drivers with

the right credentials and experience into today's trucking jobs. At the same time, the industry reports historic demand for its services. Reflecting that demand, wages for employed drivers in all trucking segments have increased 7-12% in the last year alone, but employment in some segments is still below pre-pandemic levels.

The Administration is taking action, and now we are asking industry, labor, and all levels of government to partner with us to address these trucking workforce challenges and begin building a next generation trucking workforce. A stronger trucking workforce is one where trucking jobs are good, safe, and stable — jobs that employers can attract a new generation of drivers into while retaining existing drivers to deliver for clients and grow their businesses. The nation's trucking workforce also demands clear, debt-free paths into these good jobs through high-quality training, such as Registered Apprenticeships, which prepare trainees and provide employers with a steady pipeline of skilled, safe, and experienced drivers.

Trucking employers across the U.S. are taking steps to make trucking jobs better and to develop innovative workforce programs that recruit, train, and retain drivers, especially from underrepresented communities like women, the formerly incarcerated, and service-disabled veterans. But the scale of the challenge means we need action to scale up these strategies.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law creates a pathway to address these challenges in the long-term. Today, the Biden-Harris Administration is announcing a set of concrete actions to address the expansion of trucking. These actions will support the ongoing economic recovery and lay

the foundation for a next generation trucking workforce that will strengthen U.S. competitiveness and support millions of good driving jobs for years to come.

Today, the Departments of Transportation and Labor are launching an effort to support and expand access to quality driving jobs now and in the years ahead. The Departments are accelerating the expansion of Registered Apprenticeship programs for drivers that put more skilled, safe drivers on the road; taking immediate steps to address the pandemic-driven delays in getting a commercial driver's license; curbing the proliferation of low-quality training that increases the supply of less qualified drivers who end up in debt or being exploited; and expanding more seamless paths for veterans and underrepresented communities, such as women, to access good driving jobs.

Today, the Biden-Harris Administration is announcing the following immediate actions:

Take steps to reduce barriers to drivers getting CDLs: DOT and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) are supporting state departments of motor vehicles as they return to—or even exceed—pre-pandemic commercial driver's license (CDL) issuance rates, which is helping bring more truck drivers into the field. FMCSA will provide over \$30 million in funding to help states expedite CDLs. Today, FMCSA is sending all 50 states a toolkit detailing specific actions they can take to expedite licensing and will work hand-in-hand with states to address challenges they are facing. FMCSA will also begin closely tracking delays, identifying states that have challenges with issuing CDLs, and



*Biden will invest \$30 million in the trucking industry to hire more drivers after the crippling supply chain crisis and backlash over the vaccine mandates*

communicating with all 50 governors about ways they can reduce delays in issuing CDLs.

In 2021, on average, more than 50,000 CDLs and Learners Permits have been issued each month, which is 20% higher than the 2019 monthly average and 72% higher than the 2020 monthly average. In fact, by the end of October 2021, states had issued more licenses and permits than in all of 2019. While backlogs and delays exist in

some States, they can be cleared by using proven strategies. For example, using these tools this past summer, New York reduced testing delays by 37%. California recently expanded hours and locations and increased the number of personnel who can administer

the road test. North Carolina increased the availability of testing appointments, and Texas has expanded hours, testing capacity, and shifted much of the process online. There is more work to do, and FMCSA is using the levers of government to make it easier for truck drivers to get their CDLs, while also taking actions to address retention issues.

Kick off a 90-day Challenge to accelerate the expansion of Registered Apprenticeships: This 90-day challenge is a national effort to recruit employers interested in developing new Registered Apprenticeship programs and expanding existing programs to help put more well-trained drivers on the road in good trucking jobs. Trucking employers of all sizes and across industry segments—from long haul to last mile, from cargo containers fresh off of ships to tank trucks transporting essential fuel—are seeing the potential value of Registered Apprenticeship. Registered Apprenticeship is the gold-standard of workforce training that provides paid, on-the-job learning, and today there are more than 10,000

apprentices in the trucking industry. Expanding this proven workforce strategy in trucking is critical for ensuring high-quality training for new drivers and helping employers develop and retain a skilled and safe workforce. For employers ready to step up, DOL and national partners will help accelerate new program development in as little as two days. To kick off the Challenge, DOL is announcing today:

FASTPORT, a DOL-funded national apprenticeship intermediary partner with a focus on the transportation sector, is committing to work with trucking employers, unions, and industry associations to establish Registered Apprenticeship programs for their organizations in as little as 48 hours.

DOL's Office of Apprenticeship's (OA) consultants located across the country will be available to assist organizations interested in starting a new program or joining an existing program. OA launched a [90 Day Apprenticeship Trucking Challenge website](#) for interested employers, unions, and intermediaries to express their interest in developing Registered Apprenticeship programs to meet their workforce needs.

DOL is investing 8 million in more national apprenticeship intermediaries who can help employers start Registered Apprenticeships in trucking and other supply chain industries.

Today, we are announcing that EVO Trucking, D.M. Bowman, Yellow Corporation, Florida Rock and Tank, Total Transportation, CRST, and Albertsons are committing to launch, expand, and work with our Administration on a Registered Apprenticeship through our Accelerator.

We are going to work with the Trucking Alliance and the American Trucking Associations, who will help engage their members on the value of a Registered Apprenticeship to support quality, safety, and retention.

Conduct veterans-focused outreach & recruitment: There are approximately 70,000 veterans who are likely to have certified trucking experience in the last five years. The

DOL Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will work with Veterans Service Organizations, Military Service Organizations, unions, industry trucking associations, training providers, and private partners to enable transitioning service members and veterans to attain good jobs in the trucking industry. DOL and VA will work to ensure veterans' driving experience is recognized for those seeking a CDL and will build on proven models, such as SkillBridge programs for transitioning service members.

#### **THIS INCLUDES:**

Expanding outreach with partners and stakeholders in the veteran employment space to support veteran career pathways into the trucking industry.

Helping employers seeking CDL drivers connect with federal, state, and other resources to facilitate connecting those employers to job-seeking veterans.

Expanding partnerships between the Employment Navigator and Partnership Pilot (ENPP) to the trucking industry to more effectively assist transitioning service members with the establishment of career goals and to connect them with best-in-class employment partners to facilitate positive employment outcomes.

Exploring use of the Off-Base Transition Training Pilot Program (OBTT) to extend employment readiness curriculum to connect veterans, National Guard and Reserve members, and their spouses to a career path in trucking.

Amplify VA programs that provide truck driving and related training to include the Veteran Readiness & Employment (VR&E) program and the Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program (VRRAP). VA currently offers 120 approved commercial driving programs to veterans eligible for the VRRAP program, of which 31 are currently being used. More than 8,400 commercial driving programs are approved for use by eligible veterans under the GI Bill.

Launch joint DOT- DOL Driving Good Jobs initiative: Supporting drivers and ensuring that trucking jobs are good jobs is foundational for a strong, safe, and stable trucking workforce. DOT and DOL are announcing today the launch of the joint *Driving Good Jobs* initiative, which marks a new partnership between the agencies that will include: hosting listening sessions that engage drivers, unions and worker centers, industry, and advocates; lifting up employers and best practices that support job quality and driver retention that can be scaled; working together to implement research and engagement efforts outlined in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, including studying the issue of truck driver pay and unpaid detention time; identifying effective and safe strategies to get new entrants in the field from underrepresented communities, including women and young drivers between the ages of 18-20; setting up a task force to investigate predatory truck leasing arrangements; and identifying longer term actions, such as potential administrative or regulatory actions that support drivers and driver retention by improving the quality of trucking jobs.

Over the next 90 days, the Administration will bring together state partners, labor, training providers, truckers, the trucking industry, and others to advance these efforts:

**IN THE NEXT 30 DAYS:**

DOL and DOT will kick off listening sessions with drivers, industry and labor leaders, and advocates to hear their perspectives, profile promising practices, and source scalable solutions to retention and job quality issues for truckers. The first events in this series are happening today in South Carolina with Secretary Buttigieg, Deputy Administrator Joshi, and representatives from DOL and at the White House co-chaired by Secretary Buttigieg, Secretary Walsh, and National Economic Council Director Deese.

FMCSA will issue funding opportunities for states to streamline CDL processing and reduce testing delays.

DOL, DOT, and intermediary partners will work closely with committed trucking employers to launch the first group of Apprenticeship Challenge programs.

FMCSA and DOL will begin an in-depth study of driver compensation, as part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, to examine truck driver pay, including the time drivers spend waiting to pick up or drop off freight without getting paid.

DOL's VETS and the Department of Veteran Affairs will organize a meeting with Veterans Service Organizations and Military Service Organizations to discuss opportunities to employ veterans in the trucking industry, including leveraging Veteran Affairs' education and training benefits.

**IN THE NEXT 60 DAYS:**

Acknowledging that safety is the highest priority for truck drivers, FMCSA will launch a pilot for drivers ages 18-21 as mandated by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, incorporating Registered Apprenticeships to ensure rigorous training standards and pairing each young driver with an experienced mentor.

DOL and DOT will host a series of national Apprenticeship Accelerator meetings to help more firms develop new programs and release a quick-start toolkit for apprenticeships in the trucking sector.

DOL VETS, DOL Employment and Training Administration, and DOT's Federal Motor Carriers Safety Administration will conduct a roundtable to discuss efforts to facilitate a CDL for transitioning service members and veterans. The meeting will include representatives from the United Services Military Apprenticeship Program as well as Veterans Affairs.

In FY21, VETS initiated and implemented ENPP to more effectively assist transitioning service members with the establishment of career goals and to connect them with best-in-class employment partners to facilitate positive employment outcomes. ENPP is currently at 16 military installations. DOL will expand the

Employment Navigator and Partnership Pilot (ENPP) program to now include the trucking industry.

**IN THE NEXT 90 DAYS:**

The Department of Labor will announce the results of the 90-day Apprenticeship Challenge and announce new partnerships to continue to expand apprenticeships in the trucking industry.

DOT and DOL will launch the task force dedicated to promoting the recruitment, inclusion, and advancement of women in trucking established in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. This task force will be the first of many strategies to help build the pipeline and diversify the trucking workforce.

DOT and DOL will launch the task force to investigate predatory truck leasing arrangements that dissuade drivers from entering or staying in the industry established in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

DOT and DOL will deliver a comprehensive action plan, informed by its series of listening sessions, outlining any further administrative and regulatory actions the Administration can take to support quality trucking jobs.

The Truck Action Plan is part of the Biden-Harris Administration's [Supply Chain Disruptions Task Force](#), launched in June to address near-term supply chain bottlenecks as the economy rapidly reopened following the Administration's historic vaccination and economic relief efforts.

The Task Force is co-chaired by the Secretaries of Commerce, Transportation, and Agriculture to lead a whole of government effort to address these disruptions. The Task Force has been convening stakeholders to diagnose problems and surface solutions—large and small, public or private—that will help alleviate bottlenecks and supply constraints, in order to minimize the impacts on workers, consumers, and businesses, and bolster a strong economic recovery.

The American Legion applauds the Trucking Action Plan forwarded by the Biden-Harris Administration, especially through its action to promote apprenticeships and engage in veterans-focused outreach and recruitment ([Resolution No. 25: Support and Expand Apprenticeship Opportunities for Servicemembers](#)) The American Legion is ready to work with DOL VETS and VA to ensure the the gainful employment of transitioning servicemembers and awaits the 30, 60, and 90 day outcomes.

*The United States Government. (2021, December 16). Fact sheet: The Biden-Harris Administration Trucking Action Plan to Strengthen America's trucking workforce. The White House. Retrieved December 16, 2021, from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/12/16/fact-sheet-the-biden-%E2%81%A0harris-administration-trucking-action-plan-to-strengthen-americas-trucking-workforce/>*

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**¿DID YOU KNOW?**





THE UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT *of* JUSTICE

**JUSTICE DEPARTMENT AND DEPARTMENT OF LABOR SIGN  
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING TO PROTECT THE  
EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS OF SERVICEMEMBERS AND VETERANS**

The Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division and the Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) today signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to enshrine the collaboration between the agencies to protect the employment rights provided to servicemembers by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA). The Department of Labor (DOL) and the Department of Justice seek to enhance the cooperative efforts of the two agencies in the investigation, litigation and resolution of employment and reemployment related claims brought by our nations servicemembers and veterans under USERRA.

The new MOU between DOL and Department of Justice is the first between the two agencies since 2004. It updates investigative and referral protocols and procedures, updates information sharing protocols and procedures, and if preliminary investigation of a charge reveals that immediate action is needed to prevent further harm, permits VETS to expedite the referral of a USERRA claim. In those cases, VETS will provide the Department of Justice with the investigative file and preliminary determination and the Department of Justice and VETS will work collaboratively to obtain a prompt and fair resolution of the complaint.

"Servicemembers and veterans have made great sacrifices to guarantee the freedoms and liberties that all Americans enjoy," said Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. "They are guaranteed the right to civilian employment free from discrimination based on their military service and prompt reemployment following their military deployments. Through our strong partnership with the Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service we will continue to identify USERRA claims, prosecute employers who violate the law, seek relief for victims and fight to eliminate discrimination based on military service from the workplace."

"The Department of Labor's Veterans Employment and Training Service has worked collaboratively with the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division for a long time to protect service members' and veterans' employment and reemployment rights under USERRA," said Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James Rodriguez for Policy for Veterans' Employment and Training Service. "This Memorandum of Understanding further cements our long-standing relationship with the Department of Justice to ensure that service members, veterans and employers fully understand their respective rights and obligations under the law. Together, we will continue to act swiftly if and when those rights are compromised to make them whole."

USERRA entitles servicemembers to return to their civilian employment upon completion of their military service with the seniority, status and rate of pay that they would have obtained had they remained continuously employed by their civilian employer. USERRA also prohibits discrimination based on present, past and future military service. The Attorney General has authority to bring lawsuits against private, state and local government employers for violations of USERRA only upon receiving complaint referrals from

VETS. Prior to referral, VETS investigates and attempts to resolve servicemember complaints. If the Attorney General is reasonably satisfied that the servicemember is entitled to relief, the Attorney General may commence an action in federal court on behalf of the servicemember. Since the Civil Rights Division assumed USERRA enforcement authority in 2004, it has filed 105 lawsuits and favorably resolved 193 complaints through consent decrees or private settlements.

The Department of Justice gives high priority to the enforcement of servicemembers' rights under USERRA. The MOU and additional information about USERRA can be found on the Justice Department's websites at [www.justice.gov/crt-military/employment-rights-userra](http://www.justice.gov/crt-military/employment-rights-userra) and [www.justice.gov/servicemembers](http://www.justice.gov/servicemembers) as well as on the Department of Labor's (DOL) website at [www.dol.gov/vets/programs/userra](http://www.dol.gov/vets/programs/userra).

**Attachment(s):**

**[Download Memorandum of Understanding.pdf](#)**

*Office of Public Affairs. (2021, December 8). Justice Department and Department of Labor Sign Memorandum of Understanding to protect the Employment Rights of Servicemembers and Veterans. The United States Department of Justice. Retrieved December 17, 2021, from <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-and-department-labor-sign-memorandum-understanding-protect-employment>*

## Staff Meetings on Employment Topics

*The National Veterans Employment and Education Division* virtually attended a business meeting by the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee to consider 24 pending pieces of legislation and Kurt D. Delbene's nomination to be Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology. Relevant bills considered were:

**S. 1607** *Student Veterans Transparency and Protection Act of 2021*. Introduced by Senator Schatz [D-HI], the bill seeks to improve how the VA discloses VA educational assistance risks to entitled individuals toward certain educational institutions. It also aims to restore entitlements to students pursuing educational programs at institutions subject to Federal or State civil enforcement.



**S. 1936** *GI Bill National Emergency Extended Deadline Act of 2021*. Introduced by Senator Booker [D-NJ], the bill will amend title 38 of the United States Code to provide time extensions for VA educational assistance programs due to emergency school closures.

**S. 1944** *Vet Center Improvement Act of 2021*. Introduced by Senator Reed [D-RI], the bill aims to improve VA Vet Centers

**S. 2761** *Every Veteran Counts Act of 2021*. Introduced by Senator Hirono [D-HI], the bill modifies title 38 of the United States Code in order to direct the VA Secretary to maintain demographic information and publish it to a VA website.

**S. 3094** *Reaching Every Homeless Veteran Act of 2021*. Introduced by Senator Moran [R- KS], the bill amends title 38 of the United States Code to improve the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program [HVRP].

During Chairman Tester’s opening remarks, he announced that the committee was “close to finalizing an omnibus package of veterans bills” for 2022. The committee unanimously reported the agenda items favorably by voice vote before adjourning.



## EDUCATION, LICENSING & CREDENTIALING

### **THIS VA RULE CHANGE WILL PREVENT SOME VETERANS FROM USING THEIR GI BILL**

Sometimes the best intentions create unexpected (and undesirable) results. Case in point – the recent 85/15 Rule change. The rule itself is not new – it has been in effect since the 1950s. What it said (until recently) is that the VA cannot pay

for the education of students enrolled in programs where more than 85% of students have their tuition supported by the VA or the college itself.

The recent change to the Rule is in the language of what is now considered a “supported student”. Prior to the change, the VA defined a supported student as “any student receiving VA benefits”, i.e. [the GI Bill](#).

However, under the 85/15 Rule change, a supported student would now be defined as “any student who gets a scholarship grant from their school, who is granted a waiver or tuition and fee forgiveness, or any student using a payment plan”. So now that adds a large number of non-veteran students that now fall under the 85/15 Rule that previously would not have been included before the change.

### WHAT THE 85/15 RULE MEANS

This in effect means if a school is at the maximum number of students they can have under the new 85/15 Rule, veterans who want to use their GI Bill could not enroll at that school (as well as non-veteran students falling under the Rule).

What is interesting is the statutory guidance defining the 85/15 Rule -Section 3680 of Title 38 United States Code (USC) did not change. The VA’s intent is believed to be part of their campaign to impact on predatory schools trying to get veterans to enroll with the end result being to increase the amount of money coming into the school from students using the [Post 9/11 GI Bill](#).



While any initiative that prohibits preying on veterans is worthy, many feel (including some in Congress) changing the 85/15 Rule is not the way to go about it. At least one would hope the intent of the VA was to not prevent veterans from using their GI Bill.

On November 12, Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT) – Chairman, Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS) – Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, and Rep. Mark Takano (D-CA) – Chairman, House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs sent the VA Secretary Denis McDonough a letter requesting in part:

- To provide a list of schools and/or programs that have been suspended under the new guidance.
- Why the VA changed its guidance on the 85/15 Rule when the statutory language in section 3680 of title 38, United States Code, did not change?
- What training and communication has been provided to schools on how to implement this new guidance?
- If students are activated by the Guard or Reserve during their academic term, will they be unable to return to their educational program if it drops below the 85/15 ratio during their activation?
- What resources is VA providing to school certifying officials to ask questions and gain clarification about the new guidance?

The letter included a suspense date of a reply back to Congress NLT December 1. The VA’s response (if there was one) has yet to be released to the press.

American legion supports protecting student veterans pursuing higher education using VA educational entitlements through [Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality of Servicemember and Veteran Student’s Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#).

*Kness, R. (2021, December 14). This va rule change will prevent some veterans from using their GI bill. ClearanceJobs. Retrieved December 16, 2021, from <https://news.clearancejobs.com/2021/12/14/this-va-rule-change-will-prevent-some-veterans-from-using-their-gi-bill/>*



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## DETROIT ARSENAL LEADERS DISCUSS ARMY MODERNIZATION WITH MICHIGAN LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist used a meeting at the Detroit Arsenal (DTA) on Monday, December 6, as a way to better understand the DTA's impact on the state, Michigan's economy and the Army.

Leaders from DTA organizations spent two hours talking with the lieutenant governor about the work of the various organizations and how they contribute to national defense.

Maj. Gen. Darren Werner, commanding general, U.S. Army Tank-automotive and Armaments Command said that, during the meeting, the lieutenant governor was able to learn about some of the Army's priorities and the ways in which the state could not only help veterans returning to Michigan, but also partner with the Army to update the skills of its current workforce.

"Wherever we can, we want to leverage the local community colleges as well as universities in the local area to elevate our workforce and develop a strategy where we can work with the state of Michigan," said Werner.

Werner continued, "Another area where we want to be the best in the country is advanced manufacturing, and the technology that we develop across the auto industry and defense sector ensures that we have the training, which leads us to be able to bring our folks from Anniston, Alabama; Red River Army Depot, Texas; and Watervliet, New York, here for training and onboarding, which will give us the capability to have well-trained individuals all around the country."

Werner also spoke about the relationship the Detroit Arsenal has with the local community and how joining the Army is a great opportunity for high school students.

Maj. Stefan Wilson, executive officer, Great Lakes Recruiting Battalion, provided the

lieutenant governor with information about the Army's Partnership for Youth Success (PaYS) program, which currently partners with twenty-eight organizations in Michigan to provide Soldiers separating from the Army with an opportunity to have an interview with one of the participating companies.



Gilchrist asked the group about credentialing, because the skills described by Werner and Wilson, which included automotive maintenance and information technology, showed that Soldiers have the skills, discipline and commitment to be a valuable part of companies in Michigan.

Gilchrist added, "Given what you are describing, there is an amazing amount of training that is offered by the Army. These skills are very, very important to the state and highly transferable. Has there been any talk on credentialing and additional certifications? This allows our employers to be able to see what skills an individual would be able to deliver to that organization."

Werner replied that credentialing for military members is moving forward in certain areas at different rates of speed and "there is a really important element associated with that." He added that, in his experience, every state is a little different.



Wilson was followed by Michael Cadieux, director, U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command, Ground Vehicle Systems Center, who talked about the work that GVSC does in partnership with other organizations on the arsenal.



Cadieux highlighted the agreement that GVSC has with the state at Camp Grayling to do vehicle testing. He said, “There are tremendous capabilities at Grayling, and we continue to explore those opportunities.”

Brig. Gen. Glenn Dean, program executive officer for Ground Combat Systems, gave an overview of the PEO’s operations and outlook for the future. He stated that all of the work the Army has been doing over the years was finally coming together. “We are key to the Army’s modernization priorities. We are delivering the latest generation of those platforms right now. The bulk of the investment that the Army made in modernization over the past decade is all coming to fruition,” Dean explained. He ended by saying, “Our future is now.”

Kevin McEnery, deputy director, Next Generation Combat Vehicle Cross Functional Team, added that the CFT is in Detroit because “this is where the talent is — those skills and capabilities that are unique to ground combat vehicles exist here.” He continued by saying the CFT works along four lines of effort: “discovery, momentum, operational experimentation and delivery.”

Shane Fullmer, acting deputy program executive officer for PEO Combat Support and Combat Service Support, rounded out the meeting by explaining the expansive portfolio managed by the organization. “My PEO does all the stuff that keeps the Army moving,” he said.

Additionally, PEO CS&CSS is working with Michigan companies to address different vehicle issues. In fact, according to Werner, the PEO just completed one of the most rapid acquisition programs in Army history for the Infantry Squad Vehicle (ISV) with General Motors Defense.

The meeting ended with a brief tour of the GVSC facility, during which the lieutenant governor was able to see some of the vehicles up close, and with a promise by DTA leaders and the lieutenant governor that they will follow up on the issues discussed.



Through [Resolution No. 338: Support Licensure and Certification of Servicemembers, Veterans and Spouses](#), The American Legion supports efforts to increase acceptance of training and experience in seeking employment.

*Edwards, D. (2021, December 14). Detroit Arsenal leaders discuss Army modernization with Michigan lieutenant governor. www.army.mil. Retrieved December 16, 2021, from https://www.army.mil/article/252757/detroit\_arsenal\_leaders\_discuss\_army\_modernization\_with\_michigan\_lieutenant\_governor*

# Staff Meetings on Education Topics

*The National Veterans Employment and Education Division* met with the Department of Veterans' Affairs Education Service staff and representatives from fellow Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) and stakeholders to be briefed on the implementation of The Isakson and Roe Act, risk-based surveys, and veterans' education outcome measures. The Isakson and Roe Act was signed into law last year, but some of its provisions are still being implemented. Verification enrollment, one of the few provisions to still be implemented, will require student veterans to confirm their enrollment in programs of education with the VA on a monthly basis. The rollout of enrollment verification will begin in January. The VA has developed a number of options students can choose from to verify enrollment status, including through a phone call, text message, or online platform.

*The National Veterans Employment and Education Division* met with North Carolina State Approving Agencies to discuss Veteran programs in the state. Had a conversation with North Carolina Education Liaison Representative about vocational technical training in NC and challenges in getting some of the NCD programs approved.

*The National Veterans Employment and Education Division* had a conversation with Universal Technical Institute about the new 85/15 rules and how they would be applied in an online environment.

*The National Veterans Employment and Education Division* met with STRAC Institute on vocational technical training for Veterans providing them employment in the electronics industry.

*The National Veterans Employment and Education Division* had a conversation with Geo Saba of Ro Khanna's office reference the online stem training for veterans in rural areas.

*The National Veterans Employment and Education Division* attended at GI Bill Stakeholders Meeting with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs on Thursday, December 16th, 2021. The meeting included updates on the Digital GI Bill/Modernization, Section 1010/Monthly Enrollment Verification, communications, and workload.

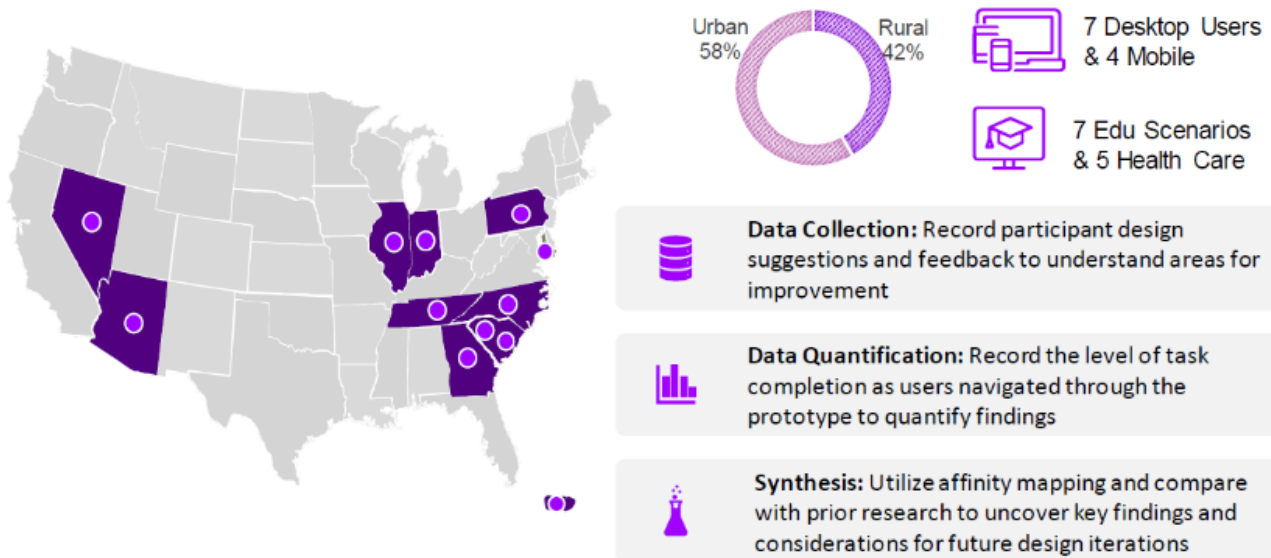
- The Department of Veterans Affairs has made the decision to delay Release 3.0 off from December 2021 to allow for additional improvements in enrollment verification and claims processing.
- The VA conducted usability testing sessions with 12 veterans across 11 different states and territories to assess My Education Benefits accessibility and user experience
- With concern to Section 1010, there were strong verification numbers a week into November enrollment verification. Text verification remains the primary driver of enrollment verification (94%)
- Regarding workload, according to the PowerPoint presented by the VA "As of December 13, 2021, pending inventory was 27,115 claims."

The next stakeholder meeting will take place on January 20th at 10:00 AM ET.

# My Education Benefits

From Nov 1-17, the Human Centered Design Team conducted Usability Testing for the My Education Benefits Secure Inbox feature

We talked to **12 Veterans** across 11 different states and territories



VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs 5

## PRESS RELEASE

### TESTER, CORTEZ MASTO LEGISLATION PROTECTING BENEFITS FOR STUDENT VETERANS HEADS TO PRESIDENT'S DESK

*Senators' REMOTE Act ensures student veterans can access their full housing allowances while pursuing education remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic*

U.S. Senators Jon Tester (D- Mont.) and Catherine Cortez Masto's (D-Nev.) [Responsible Education Mitigating Option and Technical Extensions \(REMOTE\) Act](#) is on its way to President Biden's desk following unanimous passage in the Senate today. This vital piece of legislation will ensure that student veterans can access their full housing allowances while pursuing education remotely during the pandemic.

These housing benefits were set to be cut by almost half this month, which would have created extreme uncertainty for veterans who could have been forced to abandon their education in order to make up the cost of rent or a mortgage.

**“Our bill is now one step away from ensuring student veterans in Montana and across the country have the resources and support they need to continue seeking a quality education during the pandemic and beyond,”** said Tester, Chairman of the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee. **“No veteran should ever have to face uncertainty when it comes to their future, and I’m thankful for Senator Cortez Masto’s leadership in extending housing and other critical benefits for the men and women who bravely served our nation in uniform.”**



**“This bill will give student veterans and their families the peace of mind that their housing benefits won’t be cut just because they are still learning remotely”** said Cortez Masto. **“I am proud to have introduced this important legislation that**

**will help veterans in Nevada and across the country continue to pursue their academic future without worrying about how they will pay the rent.”**

At a Committee hearing led by Tester earlier this year on improving education and employment opportunities for veterans during the pandemic, the REMOTE Act [received strong backing](#) from veterans stakeholders in Montana and across the country. Once signed into law, the bill will extend remote learning waivers, simplify the verification process for tuition reimbursement to minimize unnecessary paperwork for student veterans, and fix an error in current law to ensure U.S. universities can continue to recruit foreign students.

As Chairman, Tester fought tirelessly to [secure billions](#) in the American Rescue Plan to deliver targeted relief to veterans across the country recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. He also successfully championed [two bipartisan fixes](#) through the Senate last year to provide full, uninterrupted benefits to veterans on the GI Bill as universities transitioned classes online, and [voted to extend authorities](#) for critical programs as part of a Continuing Resolution. The REMOTE Act extends and builds on these critical efforts, ensuring student veterans have the support they need and earned for the duration of the national health emergency.

Full text of the Senators’ REMOTE Act can be found [HERE](#).

*United States Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. (2021, December 15). Tester, Cortez Masto legislation protecting benefits for student veterans heads to president's desk: United states Senate Committee on veterans' affairs. Press Release | Majority News | Newsroom | United States Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Retrieved December 17, 2021, from <https://www.veterans.senate.gov/newsroom/majority-news/tester-cortez-masto-legislation-protecting-benefits-for-student-veterans-heads-to-presidents-desk>*

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## HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING

### SCALED-BACK STAND DOWN RESUMES TO HELP HOMELESS VETERANS

It's not quite back to its original size, but the annual Operation Stand Down returned as a walk-in event Wednesday to provide clothes, housing opportunities, legal advice and other services to veterans in need.

Navy veteran John Byrd, 63, came away with a backpack and fresh clothes, but also something more.

"I got a sense of dignity back, and self-worth and purpose," he said about the clothes that will replace the tattered t-shirt he wore to the event.

Veterans Village of San Diego created Operation Stand Down in 1988 as a way of providing homeless veterans access to a variety of services in one location. The event has been replicated with more than 200 Stand Downs throughout the

country, including one in Vista that began five years ago.

The San Diego Stand Down usually is held in the summer at San Diego High School, and a record 947 veterans participated in 2010. About 600 veterans participated in 2019, but Stand Down was almost shut down during the pandemic last year when it became a one-day walk-up event in November.

It returned Wednesday as a scaled-back, one-day event in the VVSD parking lot at 4141 Pacific Highway. VVSD President and CEO Akilah Templeton, who was hired in August 2020, said Operation Stand Down usually takes a year to plan, and uncertainties about restrictions because of the pandemic would not allow time to arrange a full-scale event at the high school.



Still, more than 50 service providers attended the event, with Homeless Court attracting a steady flow of veterans throughout the day.

Attorney Matt Wechter runs Homeless Court through the Public Defender Office and said about 700 people usually register for help at the three-day event. Wechter said Homeless Court can get misdemeanors, traffic tickets and citations such as loitering dismissed. The Public Defender Office's Fresh Start program also was at the event to help people already convicted by getting them Certificates of Rehabilitation, having felonies reduced to misdemeanors and records dismissed or expunged.

Army veteran Tim Brown, 72, said he was homeless from 2012 to 2014 and stopped by the Homeless Court booth to get help with outstanding trolley citations and parking tickets, and he also picked up some new clothes and shoes while there.

"It's extremely helpful, and the volunteers are very good," he said.



*Dr Michael Gauthier applies acupuncture needles to veteran Jack Brandenburg during the annual Stand Down at the Veteran's Village of San Diego on Wednesday, November 17, 2021 Stand Down is held annually to connect homeless veterans with services and benefits. (Photo by Sandy Huffaker for The San Diego Union-Tribune) (Sandy Huffaker/SDUT)*

Navy veteran Thomas Harrington, 68, said he had never been homeless, but came to Operation Stand Down to get some new clothes and shoes, but mostly to get information about benefits. He said he learned he may be eligible for disability

benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs because he had cancer.

Army veteran Glen Allen Michael, 59, had been homeless until 2018, and credits Operation Stand Down with helping him get off the street.

"Stand Down was the ticket to everything," said Michael, who picked up food, a backpack, towels, boots and other items at the event. "Boy, they really fixed us up."

Army veteran Jack Brandenburg, 73, served in Vietnam and said he struggled with drug addiction from age 18 to 69. He lived at the VVSD rehabilitation center for a year and a half and now is housed, and said he likes to go to Operation Stand Down to see his old friends.

"I'll probably volunteer at the next Stand Down," he said. "VVSD has done a lot for me."

While at the event, he also received acupuncture treatment from Pranahands for his back pain and said he felt much better.

Templeton said about 200 people registered for Wednesday's event, but she expected more to attend.

Some services offered by VVSD have increased during the pandemic, with more people needing rental assistance and mental health services, she said. The VVSD Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic served 600 people last year, surpassing its goal by 200, and another Cohen Clinic is set to open at 3609 Ocean Ranch Blvd. in Oceanside sometime in the near future, she said. VVSD also is looking for a site to open a third clinic in Los Angeles.

"We're finding people experiencing a lot of stress, a lot of loss," she said about the effects of the pandemic. "People are grieving, people are uncertain about the future, and we see it in our numbers. We see an increase in suicide-risk assessment. We've seen an increase in the number of children needing mental health services."

Templeton said Operation Stand Down is an important event for VVSD because it impacts and

changes lives of veterans in need and brings together a community to work together.

“And we also want to leave the veteran with some dignity,” she said. “For homeless veterans who may be afraid to walk into a mental health appointment because they haven’t had an opportunity to shower, they can take a shower

here at the event, put on some fresh clothing and participate with dignity. That’s special.”

*Warth, G. (2021, November 18). Scaled-back stand down resumes to help homeless veterans. Tribune. Retrieved December 17, 2021, from <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/homelessness/story/2021-11-17/scaled-back-stand-down-resumes-to-help-veterans>*

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## RIDE WITH VALOR PROVIDES HOMELESS VETERAN A HOME IN CLEVELAND

A local nonprofit is making a commitment to helping veterans across Northeast Ohio.

Ride With Valor provides dinners, helps veterans get to their appointments, and is now in its second year of renovating and gifting a homeless veteran a home through its Hearth and Home program.

Russell Scot Rhoda, the founder of the nonprofit, said the organization is pledging to make sure local veterans have a better life.

On Saturday, it did just that for one special veteran. "Milton, my brother, welcome home," Rhoda said.

Milton Ra-Mon Smith is a Vietnam war veteran who was homeless and lost his service dog.

"When my dog died, it broke my heart. I cried for maybe three or four days," Smith said. "I still look

for her when I walk. When you come in, when you walk, open your door and think she's there. She's not there."

Smith received a home in Cleveland through Ride With Valor's program

But the new home wasn't all Smith received. He also got a new four-legged companion.

"This is a double blessing," Smith said. "I'm in love, man."

According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, more than 37,000 veterans are currently experiencing homelessness. Connecticut, Delaware and Virginia are the only states to have effectively ended homelessness among veterans.

*Burton, T. (2021, November 21). Ride with Valor provides homeless veteran a home in Cleveland. WEWS. Retrieved December 17, 2021, from <https://www.news5cleveland.com/news/made-us-smile/ride-with-valor-provides-homeless-veteran-a-home-in-cleveland>*

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## Staff Meetings on Homelessness Topics

*The National Veterans Employment and Education Division* attended a forum held by The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Center on Homelessness Among Veterans. The Homeless Education and Research Synthesis (HERS) roundtable presented research examining primary care engagement among individuals with housing insecurity and serious mental illness.



The moderator, National Center Director Dina Hooshyar, opened the forum by providing background on the topic and how the study came to fruition. In October 2019, The VA National Center on Homelessness Among Veterans was working with Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through a supportive housing program to enhance the primary care engagements by participating veterans who were diagnosed with serious mental illnesses or experiencing homelessness.

According to Hooshyar, individuals experiencing homelessness often utilize emergent care more than preventative care, face high rates of chronic and mental illness (25%) and die younger than those who do not suffer from homelessness. Unfortunately, the literature is limited on homeless populations who may or may not have serious mental illnesses (SMI), including the population served by the VA's Homeless Patients Care Team, resulting in the study being presented by the VA Evidence Synthesis Program. The VA Evidence Synthesis Program, based in four locations around the U.S., takes critical clinical questions regarding Veteran-focused healthcare topics and synthesizes the evidence in prepared reports to inform policies through evidence, implement effective services, and address clinical knowledge gaps.

Megan Shepherd-Banigan, a principal investigator for the evidence map, provided additional background leading to the study, the research question posed, and key takeaways the results yielded.



According to Shepherd-Banigan, the proportion of adults who both experience homelessness and are diagnosed with an SMI face “enhanced vulnerabilities such as stigma, bias, low social support, and low community adjustment, and can be associated with increased engagement with illegal activities.”

Furthermore, this population subset may face increased barriers to acquiring traditional clinic-based care, resulting in “less preventative care and chronic care management, more emergency department visits, more substance use,” and a 25-year reduction in life expectancy compared to the general population. Health engagement strategy literature treats homeless and SMI populations as mutually exclusive, with little overlap. The research question generated looks at the intervention strategies studied between patients in both SMI and homeless populations. A notable limitation is that the literature does not solely focus on veterans.

While limited evidence of healthcare engagement strategies for patients in both homeless and SMI populations exist, there is a range of tested methods that enhance service integration across the patient, clinic, and system-level when applied together.

A literature review of intervention-specific strategies is conducted through an evidence map to “identify gaps in knowledge and further research needs and present the results in a user-friendly format, often using visual figures or graphs.”

Regarding codifying definitions, Shepherd-Banigan defined homelessness as “lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.” SMI was defined through the presence of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. Through conversations with the VA Synthesis Program's panel of technical experts, the SMI definition decided not to include PTSD “even though that is such an important diagnosis in the veteran population.” Primary care was narrowly defined as “structured interactions between an individual patient with a primary care provider or clinical team that had a direct linkage to a prescribed Medicare provider.” This was done to illustrate managing health over time through established relationships between patients and primary care providers.

As a result, Shepherd-Banigan concluded that examining the literature of interventions and strategies along with primary care connections and engagement assisted in generating programs that could allow engagement through any service.

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The VA provides free, confidential support 24/7 for Veterans and their family and friends. If you are in crisis, contact the Veterans Crisis Line by dialing 1 (800) 273-8255 (Press 1), or texting 838255, or visiting <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net>. If you are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or facing housing insecurity, contact the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans (NCCHV) by dialing 1 (877) 424-3838 or visiting <https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/>.

Do you know your Veteran status? Do you have a Veteran ID card? Do you receive any benefits from VA, like the GI Bill? Do you know what health care benefits you have earned? If you need answers to one or more of these questions, the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) has established the Women Veterans Call Center (WVCC) just for you. You can contact the WVCC by dialing 1-855-VA-Women (1-855-829-6636) or visiting <https://www.womenshealth.va.gov>. For more information on resources, benefits, and services available to you, you can also visit the Center for Women Veterans (CWV) at <https://www.va.gov/womenvet/>.

**HELP US SERVE YOU BETTER.**

We want to hear from women who have served in the military. The following questions are designed to help VA gain a basic understanding of why women Veterans may not be using the VA and what VA can do to help change that. By answering the following questions, you directly help us improve VA services.

This survey should take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

[Click Here to Take Survey](#)

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## U.S. Small Business Administration Community Navigator Pilot Program



# SMALL BUSINESS & GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING

### SBA CHIEF VISITS IONA TO HIGHLIGHT \$5M VETERAN'S BUSINESS PROGRAM

The administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and other top SBA officials were among those at Iona College in New Rochelle on Dec. 8 for meetings on SBA programs including the new Community Navigator Pilot Program, which is funding a program that involves Iona's Hynes Institute for Entrepreneurship & Innovation.

The \$100 million Community Navigator Pilot Program was established as part of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 and provides grants to fund programs that assist small businesses hit hard by the pandemic.

SBA officials on hand at Iona included: Administrator Isabella Casillas Guzman; Mark Madrid, associate administrator in the Office of Entrepreneurial Development; Diedra Henry-Spires, senior adviser for Covid programs; Shalei Holway, senior adviser in the Office of



*SBA Administrator Isabella Casillas Guzman at Iona*

Entrepreneurial Development; and Marlene Cintron, Region 2 administrator.

A \$5 million grant was authorized for Syracuse University's Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) to conduct a two-year program supporting veteran and military spouse businesses. Syracuse University selected Iona's Hynes Institute to partner with it in the program.



Christoph Winkler is the founding director of the Hynes Institute.

The program is intended to provide entrepreneurship education, small business technical assistance, loan preparation, access to capital, networking and more.

“The Small Business Administration has adapted dramatically during Covid just as our small businesses have,” Guzman said. “One of the main things we recognized is that during Covid connection was key, being able to connect quickly to resources to be able to position your business for survival.”

Guzman said that the Community Navigator Pilot Program allows the agency to build bridges to underserved communities so that they can reconnect to federal, state and local resources and be provided with the support networks that they need to survive.



*Iona President Seamus Carey*

“The Navigator Program is going to level up our resources partner network by connecting entrepreneurs to the great content and the capital and the government contracting opportunities and the trade opportunities that the SBA presents to small businesses on a regular basis,” Guzman said. “We are so pleased that Syracuse University chose to partner with Iona and focus on our military veterans and military spouses as well and their entrepreneurial pursuits. That’s a population that is really important to us at the federal government and across the country as they have

served our nation and now are serving in their communities as business owners, risk-takers.”

Guzman recalled that small business entrepreneurship has been part of her life from childhood, having grown up working in her father’s veterinary hospital business “learning the grit and determination it takes to start a business and not only that but just the impact they have on local neighborhoods.”

Seamus Carey, the president of Iona College, said, “This program is really special to us because we get to serve people who serve us and that’s a unique combination that makes it really exciting to see what we can do.”

New Rochelle’s Mayor Noam Bramson characterized small businesses as the backbone of the local and national economies and noted that New Rochelle has more than 1,500 veteran households.

“The intersection of these two groups is, I think, such an appropriate place for us to focus our energies,” Bramson said. “No groups are more deserving of our support and, of course, all of us benefit when veteran entrepreneurs have every opportunity to succeed.”

The American Legion full heartedly supports SBA initiatives and programming that increase access to capital for veteran owned small business owners and entrepreneurs. This commitment is outlined in [Resolution No. 222: Reaffirm support of the Small Business Administration's Office of Veterans' Business Development.](#)

*Katz, P. (2021, December 13). SBA chief visits Iona to highlight \$5M veteran's business program. Westchester & Fairfield County Business Journals. Retrieved December 17, 2021, from <https://westfaironline.com/143390/sba-chief-visits-iona-to-highlight-5m-veterans-business-program/>*



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## STATE OF SMALL BUSINESS: WHAT RECENT SURVEYS SAY AT END OF 2021

It feels a bit like Groundhog Day in the world of small businesses: higher prices, hiring difficulties, supply chain headaches. And unrelenting uncertainty over the trajectory of the national economy.

Here's a look, via recent small business surveys, at how they're doing as we head toward the end of 2021.

### **OVERALL SENTIMENT: ON ONE HAND, ON THE OTHER**

First, the good news. In its Q3 report, released in October, Yelp found that "the vast majority [85%] of businesses that experienced a temporary closure during the pandemic have reopened." In the most recent Small Business Pulse Survey data from the Census Bureau (now in Phase 7, through the first week of December), 36% of respondents expect recovery to take longer than six months. That is the best reading since July and far better than a year ago, when nearly half of small businesses saw prolonged recovery.

This improvement in small business outlook may reflect the banner day that many experienced two days after Thanksgiving, on what's become known as Small Business Saturday. An American Express survey said consumer spending at small businesses hit an all-time high of \$23.3 billion this year. That was an 18% increase from 2020. Over half (58%) of respondent shoppers said they bought something from a small business online. That was just 43% in 2019.

Fortified optimism among small businesses is also reflected in new business openings, the total number of which is higher through the first three quarters of 2021 than during the same time period in 2019, according to Yelp. Increases have been seen especially among hotels, nightlife (dance clubs, comedy clubs, lounges), and beauty services.

The Small Business CEO Confidence Index, tracked in the WSJ/Vistage survey, fell in November for the sixth straight month. Just 26%

of respondents expect economic improvement within the next year, while 34% expect the economy to worsen. Similarly, the October Small Business Economic Trends report from the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) found a continuing slide in the share of small businesses expecting better business conditions within six months.

Few small businesses have enjoyed full recovery. In Alignable's Road to Recovery November report, just 27% said they are at or above pre-Covid revenue levels. Respondents in the Pulse survey (with a much larger sample) report even worse experience. Just 19% have returned to their normal level of operations, a drop of three points from July.

Worryingly, one in eight small businesses in the Pulse survey say they "do not believe this business will return to its normal level of operations." That sounds low, but it's the highest share saying this in any phase of the survey. Alignable also highlighted what continues to be a disparate pace of recovery among small businesses: 85% of minority-owned businesses say have yet to fully recover, compared to 77% veteran-owned, 76% women-owned, 72% non-minority owned.

### **CAPITAL? MAYBE LATER.**

In Biz2Credit's latest Small Business Lending Index, reporting results for November, loan approvals for small businesses rose across nearly all types of lenders from the previous month:

Alternative lenders: 25.8%  
Institutional lenders: 24.8%  
Credit unions: 20.6%  
Small banks: 19.9%  
Big banks: 14.2%

Each, with the exception of credit unions, was higher than a year earlier

The challenge, it seems, is that not many small businesses are seeking fresh finance. In the NFIB

report, nearly one-quarter (23%) of respondents said all their credit needs were met—and 63% reported no interest in a new loan. Those findings are in line with the Pulse survey, where just 14% of small businesses said they needed to obtain financial assistance or more capital. That share has been below one-fifth since mid-March.

Small businesses, according to these surveys, just don't see the need for more capital or credit right now. That could be due to the dour expectations discussed above; or, it could be due two other headwinds facing small businesses.

### **INFLATING DELAYS**

The federal government reported last week that consumer prices rose last month at their fastest pace since 1982. This was no surprise to small businesses, who have been saying for weeks that they're paying higher prices. Three-quarters of respondents in the Pulse survey say they face "moderate" or "large" increase in prices compared to pre-COVID. This is particularly true in construction, manufacturing, and accommodation/food service.

While many small businesses may have attempted to eat those higher prices in the hope that inflation would be "transitory," more have begun to pass costs along to customers. The NFIB survey reported a seven-point increase—to a net 53 percent—in small businesses raising prices. Nine out of 10 small businesses in the Alignable survey said they're concerned about the negative impact of inflation, with one-third (34%) saying costs of supplies and inventory have risen by more than 25%!

Supply chain difficulties and delays continue to contribute to rising prices. Over half (55%) of respondents in the WSJ/Vistage survey cited challenges with domestic suppliers. The share isn't quite that high in the Pulse survey (44%), but that's close to the highest share going back to August 2020. Another 19% say they're facing foreign supplier delays.

Back in January of this year, 12% of small business Pulse respondents said their biggest future need was to identify new supply chain

options. That had nearly doubled, by the beginning of this month, to 22%.

### **HIGHER AND HIRE**

Compounding their headaches—and contributing to higher prices—are the difficulties faced by small businesses in recruiting new employees. Here's a rundown of survey findings on this front.

Alignable:

- Two-thirds face hiring difficulties, with 43% saying it's "significantly more difficult" to find new employees.

NFIB Small Business Economic Trends:

- Net 44% reported raising compensation in a bid to hire new employees. That's the highest level in the 48-year history of index.

NFIB Jobs Report, a separate survey run in November:

- Labor quality was cited as the top problem by 29% of small businesses, the highest in the 48 years of the survey.
- 48% said they had job openings they couldn't fill; the historical average is 22%.
- 56% said there were no or few qualified applicants for their openings.

Census Pulse:

- 32% said they had difficulties in the last week hiring paid employees. (That was actually the lowest level for this particular question.) But for the twelfth straight survey reading, identifying and hiring new employees was cited as the biggest future need.

### **SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESS COMPETITIVENESS**

One more recent survey is worth calling attention to, as it relates to ways that small businesses are trying to attract and retain employees. A new working paper published last month by the National Bureau of Economic Research found, in a survey, that small business support for paid family leave (PFL) "increased significantly during COVID-19." In particular, those small

businesses that used a state PFL program (in this case, New York or New Jersey), demonstrated the greatest increase in support for PFL policies.

The authors take care to note limitations and areas for further research, but this is noteworthy for a couple of reasons. First, expansion of paid leave is at the core of Washington policy disputes today, right on the heels of the pandemic and the demands it placed on workers who were sick or caring for sick family members. Second, the paper's findings are contrary to the conventional wisdom that small businesses universally oppose paid leave policies.

Either way, this finding (however limited) demonstrates that small businesses might be thinking more creatively and expansively about

how to navigate today's challenges. Policymakers should be creative in seeking to support them.

The American Legion supports policies that expand opportunities for veteran-owned small businesses and veteran entrepreneurs, including increasing representation of the veteran business community at the Department of Veterans Affairs as codified in [Resolution No. 19: Support the Creation of a Department of Veterans Affairs Small Business Advisory Committee.](#)

*Stangler, D. (2021, December 15). State of Small Business: What recent surveys say at end of 2021. Forbes. Retrieved December 17, 2021, from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/danestangler/2021/12/13/state-of-small-business-what-recent-surveys-say-at-end-of-2021/?sh=22faae766c0b>*

## Staff Meetings on Small Business Topics

*The National Veterans Employment and Education Division* held a Small Business Task Force Chair meeting with the newly appointed chairs of the task force's subcommittees. Each subcommittee will serve as an internal advisory group to the Task Force on matters related to their specific policy areas. Newly appointed chairs include:

- Noel Gonzalez, Founder of SkillMil Inc. – Cybersecurity Subcommittee
- Keith Forkin, CEO of Semperso – Veterans Preference Subcommittee
- Marc Goldschmitt, Owner of Goldschmitt and Associates - Verification Subcommittee
- Matt Walker, Vice President for Government Affairs at the National Restaurant Association – Taxes Subcommittee
- William Elmore, Owner of M2BA – Access to Capital Subcommittee

During the meeting, American Legion staff outlined expectations and timeline for upcoming subcommittee and task force activities. The meeting also served as an opportunity for chairs to ask questions and discuss potential subcommittee priorities moving into the new year.

*The National Veterans Employment and Education Division* met with Adam Rocke, Senior Director of External Engagements at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation – Hiring our Heroes, Frank J. Larkin, a national advocate for veteran suicide prevention and traumatic brain research, and Rick Kell, Co-founder of Warrior Call, to discuss veteran suicide prevention and economic issues. The meeting also included Katie Purswell, Director of the American Legion Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division.

Rick Kell provided an overview of the Warrior Call program and its mission to ensure the wellbeing of returning servicemembers. Kell discussed Warrior Call’s various initiatives, including the Leroy Petry Village of Honor, a transitional housing program for veterans who have sustained injuries and their families that provides access to recreation and resources in Riverdale Maryland. Kell also discussed Operation Proper Exit, a program designed to connect veteran servicemembers with those actively deployed to visit sites of personal significance during their time in uniform. Kell also described the buddy check program that Warrior Call has established to promote dialogue and support between servicemembers who are struggling with mental health concerns and expand awareness among the civilian community about veteran mental health issues.

Frank Larkin discussed the systemic and institutional challenges facing veteran mental healthcare. Specifically, Larkin remarked on the lack of a wholistic approach to addressing mental health among government agencies. American Legion staff commented on the interconnectedness between mental health and economic issues, including homelessness, small business success, and homelessness.

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***The National Veterans Employment and Education Division*** attended a congressional hearing titled “Digital Assets and the Future of Finance: Understanding the Challenges and Benefits of Financial Innovation in the United States”. The hearing included testimony from the following individuals Jeremy Allaire, Co-Founder, Chairman and CEO of Circle, Samuel Bankman-Fried, Founder and CEO of FTX, Brian P. Brooks, CEO of Bitfury Group, Charles Cascarilla, CEO and co-Founder of Paxos Trust Company, Denelle Dixon, CEO and Executive Director of Stellar Development Foundation, and Alesia Jeanne Haas, CEO, Coinbase Inc. and CFO of Coinbase Global Inc.



The meeting began with Chairwoman Maxine Waters (D - CA-43) and Ranking Member Patrick McHenry (R – NC – 10) providing opening statements highlighting the current state of cryptocurrency regulation, including the perceived benefits and detractions of the technology.



Jeremy Allaire, Co-Founder, Chairman and CEO of Circle advocated for the expansion of USD Coin, a Circle stable coin, that attempts to provide the benefits of efficiency provided by cryptocurrency while mitigating the volatility that is often associated with the technology. Allaire discussed how circle is seeking a full national banking charter for USD, in doing so trying to ensure that the dollar remains the primary currency of the internet.



Samuel Bankman-Fried, Founder and CEO of FTX discussed the societal benefits of cryptocurrencies, especially with regards to remittances and sharing of assets. Bankman-Fried emphasized the importance of expanding cryptocurrency platforms for increasing social equity while underlining the need to mitigate risks.

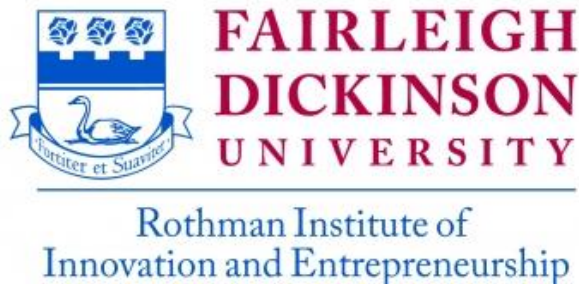


Brian P. Brooks, CEO of Bitfury Group, examined the concept of bitcoin mining (the transaction validation process used in blockchain) and testified about what Bitfury is doing to mitigate the negative environmental ramifications of the practice's energy use. Brooks also warns against making uniform policy decisions and regulatory measures across the entire blockchain industry and instead advocates for a nuanced approach to crypto regulation that encompasses the technology's various applications.

The full committee hearing can be accessed [here](#).

## SPOTLIGHT

### FREE ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAINING AVAILABLE TO VETERANS



Have you ever wanted to launch your own business but weren't sure where to begin? The Veterans Launching Ventures (VLV) certificate course could be the start.

Offered by Fairleigh Dickinson University's Rothman Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, the VLV program provides essential training for Veterans and their families looking to open or grow a business.

This free certificate course is designed to help participants seize entrepreneurial opportunities by imparting essential skills and competencies to succeed in today's business environment, including developing business and marketing plans, devising financial projections, and formulating fundraising strategies.

The course leverages a team of experienced faculty and successful entrepreneurs and combines in-person and virtual learning to create an interactive, informative academic platform. A unique aspect of the VLV

course is that Veterans are matched with a mentor who can provide individual guidance throughout the course and up to 10 months following course completion.

The course also allows Veterans to train alongside other Veterans.

Joey Mac Dizon, a U.S. Marine Corps Iraqi War Veteran, is the CEO/co-founder of The Mobile Cigar Lounge and Mission Transition. He completed the VLV course in 2017 and emphasizes the valuable knowledge, skills and support the VLV course provides.

“Fairleigh Dickinson University’s Rothman Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship’s ‘Veterans Launching Venture’ program is an integral part of my business’s success,” Mac Dizon said. “The amount of knowledge, support and resources are fantastic. I continually support and keep up with any news from the organization because they continue to help Veterans, like myself, become an entrepreneur. This is a must for any Veteran or military spouse looking to go into business or grow their business. Thank you to VLV and the staff supporting the program. They really help us achieve the dream of owning our own business.”

The VLV certificate course is free and open to all Veterans and their families. Applications are now being accepted for the spring and fall 2022 classes, and each course can accommodate up to 50 students. To learn more about this opportunity, visit [Veterans Launching Ventures | Fairleigh Dickinson University](#).

*Free entrepreneurial training available to veterans. Vantage Point. (2021, December 16). Retrieved December 17, 2021, from [https://blogs.va.gov/Vantage/98301/entrepreneurial-training-veterans/?utm\\_source=middle&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=VetResources&utm\\_id=15DEC2021](https://blogs.va.gov/Vantage/98301/entrepreneurial-training-veterans/?utm_source=middle&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=VetResources&utm_id=15DEC2021)*



**CAREER FAIRS**

## The American Legion is working on future virtual workshops and career fairs.

*The American Legion's National Veterans Employment & Education Commission's Mission is to take actions that affect veterans' economic well-being, including issues relating to veterans' education, employment, home loans, vocational rehabilitation, homelessness, and small business.*



# LEGISLATION TRACKING

## EDUCATION, LICENSING & CREDENTIALING PORTFOLIO

**H.R. 5676 - PREP Act:** This bill establishes, within the Bureau of Prisons, an Office of Prison Education. The office must provide educational services to incarcerated individuals, including veterans, in federal prisons and correctional institutions. It would also require the office to inform eligible incarcerated veterans of their earned VA educational benefits.

**Status:** Referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, 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.



[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality of Service member and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#)

**H.R. 5545 - Responsible Education Mitigating Options and Technical Extensions (REMOTE) Act:**

This draft bill would extend expiring provisions established to support student veterans using educational entitlements during the pandemic.

Status: 10/08/21 - Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on the Budget

[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality-of-Service member and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#)

**H.R. 5509: Student Veteran COVID-19 Protection Act of 2021:** This draft bill would extend expiring provisions established to support student veterans using educational entitlements during the pandemic.

Status: 10/08/21 - Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality-of-Service member and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#)

**S. 1480 - Recognizing Military Service in PSLF Act:** This bill would allow service members who pause their student loan payments while deployed or on extended active-duty orders to count that period of time toward their PSLF progress – which is currently not allowed.

Status: 4/29/2021 - Referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

[Resolution No. 101 Support for Continuation of Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program](#)

**H.R. 1836 - Guard and Reserve GI Bill Parity Act of 2021:** This bill would expand eligibility for the post-9/11 GI Bill to count every day that a servicemember is paid and in uniform toward benefit eligibility in order to achieve GI Bill parity for National Guard and Reserve members.

Status: 6/16/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

[Resolution No. 349: Support Legislation to Improve the Post-9/11 GI Bill](#)

**S. 1607 - Student Veterans Transparency and Protection Act of 2021:** This bill would improve veterans' access to information about higher education and allow the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to restore benefits that veterans use at schools subject to civil enforcement.

Status: 05/13/2021 - Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

[Resolution No. 327: Support further Assessment and Evaluation of Institutions of Higher Learning to Enable Veterans to Make Informed Education Choices](#)

**H.R. 2587 - SERVE Act:** This bill would improve the ability of veterans with medical training to assist the United States in response to national emergencies by implementing programs to certify and credential veterans.

Status: 7/14/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Health

[Resolution No. 338: Support Licensure and Certification of Servicemembers, Veterans and Spouses](#)

**H.R. 3586 - Veteran Education Empowerment Act:** This bill would reauthorize and improve a grant program to assist institutions of higher education in establishing, maintaining, improving, and operating Student Veteran Centers

Status: 5/28/2021 - Referred to the House Committee on Education and Labor

[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality-of-Service member and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#)

**H.R. 2327 -** This bill would eliminate the time period for eligibility under Survivors' And Dependents' Educational Assistance Program of Department of Veterans Affairs



Status: 4/28/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality-of-Service member and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#)

**H.R. 4233 - Student Veterans Counseling Centers Eligibility Act:** This bill would award grants to community-based Veteran Centers to provide counseling and mental health services to veterans using VA higher education benefits.

Status: 9/07/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Health

[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality-of-Service member and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#)

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## **EMPLOYMENT & TRANSITION PORTFOLIO**

**S.2483- Improving Cybersecurity of Small Organizations Act of 2021:** To require the Director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency to establish cybersecurity guidance for small organizations, and for other purposes.

Status: 07/27/21 Read twice and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

[Resolution No. 12: Cybersecurity Protections for Veteran-Owned Small Businesses](#)

**H.R.2196 - Justice for Servicemembers Act:** To amend title 9 of the United States Code to prohibit predispute arbitration agreements that force arbitration of certain disputes arising from claims of servicemembers and veterans.

Status: 10/19/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Antitrust, Commercial, and Administrative Law.

[Resolution No. 85: Support Employment and Reemployment Rights of National Guard and Reservists Returning from Deployment](#)

**S. 94 - Hire Student Veterans Act:** This bill allows a work opportunity tax credit for hiring a veteran attending an educational institution using educational assistance provided under certain programs administered by the Department of Defense or the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Status: 1/28/2021 - Referred to the Committee on Finance

[Resolution No. 354: Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program](#)

**H.R.447 - National Apprenticeship Act of 2021:** To amend the Act of August 16, 1937 (commonly referred to as the "National Apprenticeship Act") and expand the national apprenticeship system to include apprenticeships, youth apprenticeships, and pre-apprenticeship registered under such Act, to promote the furtherance of labor standards necessary to safeguard the welfare of apprentices, and for other purposes.

Status: 02/25/2021 - Received in the Senate and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

[Resolution No. 25: Support and Expand Apprenticeship Opportunities for Servicemembers](#)

**H.R.3582 - Veteran Employment Recovery Act:** This bill increases the work opportunity tax credit in 2021 for the hiring of certain disabled or unemployed veterans.

Status: 05/28/2021 – Referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means

[Resolution No. 354: Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program](#)

**S.2274 - Federal Cybersecurity Workforce Expansion Act:** To authorize the Director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency to establish an apprenticeship program and to establish a pilot program on cybersecurity training for veterans and members of the Armed Forces transitioning to civilian life, and for other purposes.

Status: 06/24/2021 – Read twice and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

[Resolution No. 25: Support and Expand Apprenticeship Opportunities for Servicemembers](#)

**H.R.4552 - Veterans' Agricultural Apprenticeship Act of 2021:** To amend title 5, United States Code, to modify specific requirements concerning service and retirement for veterans' Preference for federal hiring.

Status: 09/08/2021 – Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

[Resolution No. 25: Support and Expand Apprenticeship Opportunities for Servicemembers](#)

**H.R.143 - HERO Transition from Battlespace to Workplace Act of 2021:** To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a tax credit to encourage private employers to hire veterans, to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the reasonable efforts an employer may make under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act with respect to hiring veterans, and for other purposes.

Status: 03/08/2021 – Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

[Resolution No. 354: Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program](#)

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## **HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING PORTFOLIO**

**H.R. 2190 - Helping Homeless Veterans Act of 2021:** This bill permanently establishes existing programs that assist homeless veterans and other veterans with special needs.

Status: 6/16/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

[Resolution No. 319: Expanding Veterans Employment and Homeless Services within the Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

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## **SMALL BUSINESS & GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING PORTFOLIO**

**H.R. 4515 - Small Business Development Center Cyber Training Act of 2021:** This bill would amend the Small Business Act to require cyber certification for small business development center counselors.

Status: 11/03/2021 Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

[Resolution No. 12: Cybersecurity Protections for Veteran-Owned Small Businesses](#)

**S.1687 - Small Business Cyber Training Act of 2021:** This bill requires the Small Business Administration to establish a program for certifying at least 5 or 10% of the total number of employees of a small business development center to provide cybersecurity planning assistance to small businesses.

Status: 5/18/2021 – Introduced in the Senate Committee on Entrepreneurship

[Resolution No. 12: Cybersecurity Protections for Veteran-Owned Small Businesses](#)

**H.R.5354 - Veterans Jobs Opportunity Act:** This bill would establish a small startup tax credit for veterans, military spouses, army reservists and national guard members seeking to start small businesses.

Status: 9/27/2021 – Introduced in the House Committee on Ways and Means

[Resolution No. 14: Enhancing the Work Opportunity Tax Credit \(WOTC\) for Veteran Workers](#)

**S. 2812 - Veterans Jobs Opportunity Act:** This bill would establish a small startup tax credit for veterans, military spouses, army reservists and national guard members seeking to start small businesses.

Status: 9/27/2021 – Referred to the Senate Committee on Finance

[Resolution No. 14: Enhancing the Work Opportunity Tax Credit \(WOTC\) for Veteran Workers](#)

**H.R.3469 - Veteran Entrepreneurship Training Act of 2021:** This bill provides statutory authority for the Boots to Business Program, which provides entrepreneurship training to individuals including veterans and active members of the Armed Forces, to be administered by the Small Business Administration.

**Status:** 11/03/2021 – Passed in the House of Representatives

[Resolution No. 222: Reaffirm Support of the Small Business Administration's Office of Veterans' Business Development](#)

## ACTION TAKEN ON LEGISLATION

### EDUCATION, LICENSING & CREDENTIALING PORTFOLIO

**Draft Bill - VET Student Loan Act:** This draft bill would eliminate the time limits on many veterans' education benefits retroactively.

**Action Taken:** Bill Reviewed - Support

**Status:** Draft – Not yet introduced

**What's Next:**

[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality of Service member and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#)

**Draft Bill - Boldly Repaying America's Veterans with Education Act (BRAVE Act):** This draft bill would amend Section 108(f) of the Internal Revenue Service Code to eliminate the taxability of discharged student loans for veterans who died or were left permanently disabled as a result of their service.

**Action Taken:** Bill Reviewed - Support

**Status:** Draft – Not yet introduced

**What's Next:**

[Resolution No. 347: Veterans Education Debt Forgiveness](#)

**Draft Legislation on Work Study for Half-Time Students:** To amend title 38, United States Code, to extend eligibility for a certain work-study allowance paid by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to certain individuals who pursue programs of rehabilitation, education, or training on at least a half-time basis.

**Action Taken:** VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

**Status:**

**What's Next:** Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality of Service member and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#)

**Draft Legislation on Repay MGIB:** To amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs repays members of the Armed Forces for certain contributions made by such members towards Post-9/11 Educational Assistance.

**Action Taken:** VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

**Status:**

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality of Service member and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#)

**Draft Legislation on Death GI Bill Transfer:** To amend title 38, United States Code to provide for the transfer of entitlement to educational assistance under Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program of Department of Veterans Affairs when an eligible individual dies after approval of transfer and before transferring all of the individual's entitlement, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status:

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality of Service member and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#)

**Draft Legislation on Extend FRY After Discharge:** To amend title 38, United States Code, to expand eligibility for the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship to include spouses and children of individuals who die from a service-connected disability within 120 days of serving in the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status:

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality of Service member and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#)

**Draft legislation on Extend VRE Time:** To extend the delimiting period for certain individuals to use educational assistance benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status:

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality of Service member and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#)

**Draft Legislation on SCRA for Education:** "To amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to establish protections under that Act for a member of the Armed Forces who leaves a course of education, paid for with certain educational assistance, to perform certain service."

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status:

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality of Service member and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#)

**Draft Legislation on Student Childcare Voucher:** "To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to pay to certain veterans, who receive certain educational assistance furnished by the Secretary, a weekly stipend for child care services."

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status:

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality of Service member and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#)



**Draft Legislation on Prohibit CH. 35 for HS:** To amend title 38, United States Code, to prohibit the use of entitlement to educational assistance under the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program for secondary school education.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status:

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality of Service member and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#)

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## **EMPLOYMENT & TRANSITION PORTFOLIO**

**Draft Legislation on WARTAC Report:** To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to report on the Warrior Training Advancement Course of the Veterans Benefit Administration.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status:

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

[Resolution No. 105: Support and Expand Warrior Transition Advancement Course \(WARTAC\)](#)

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## **HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING PORTFOLIO**

**H.R. 5529: Veterans Justice Outreach Improvement Act:** To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make certain improvements to the Veterans Justice Outreach Program, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: Referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on 10/08/2021

Status:

What's Next: Pending Action by House

[Resolution No. 145: Veterans Treatment Courts](#)

**Draft Legislation on Homeless Grant Elimination of Matching:** Adjustment of Grants Awarded by the Secretary of Veteran Affairs for Comprehensive Service Programs to serve homeless veterans.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status:

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

[Resolution No. 319: Expanding Veterans Employment and Homeless Services within the Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

**Draft Legislation on Eliminate Loan Limitations:** To amend title 38, United States Code, to eliminate the Freddie Mac conforming loan limitation for loans made to veterans with remaining guaranty or insurance loan entitlement under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status:

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

[Resolution No. 314: Support Elimination of the VA Home Loan Funding Fee](#)

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**H.R. 5624 - SSVF Report Requirement:** To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a report on the shallow subsidy program under the supportive services for veteran families program, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status: 10/19/2021 Referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

What's Next: Pending Action by Committee

[Resolution No. 340: Support Permanent Authorization for the Supportive Services for Veteran Families \(SSVF\) Program](#)

**Draft Legislation on Homelessness Substance Abuse Pilot:** To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program on substance use and alcohol use disorder recovery for homeless veterans, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status:

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

Resolution: Pending Draft Resolution

**Draft Legislation on Increase Homelessness Per Diem:** To amend title 38, United States Code, to adjust the rate of per diem payments provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to grantees that provide services to homeless veterans.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21, Provided Quote in Support of Bill on 10/13/2021

Status:

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

[Resolution No. 24: Support Funding and Changes to the Department of Veterans Affairs Grant and Per Diem Program](#)

**Draft Legislation on Homelessness Elderly Pilot:** To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program on grants for care for elderly homeless veterans, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status:

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

[Resolution No. 319: Expanding Veterans Employment and Homeless Services within the Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

**H.R. 5301 - Homelessness Tech Assistance:** To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide technical assistance to recipients of grants for supportive services for very low-income families in permanent housing and comprehensive service programs, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status: 09/30/2021 Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

What's Next: Pending Action by Committee

Resolution: Pending Draft Resolution

**H.R. 5025 - Homelessness Extend HVRP:** To amend title 38, United States Code, to increase and extend the authorization of appropriations for homeless veterans reintegration programs.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status: 09/09/2021 Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

What's Next: Pending Action by Committee

[Resolution No. 319: Expanding Veterans Employment and Homeless Services within the Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

**H.R.492 - Supporting Veteran Families in Need Act:** To amend title 38, United States Code, make permanent the Secretary of Veterans Affairs' authority to provide financial assistance for supportive services for very low-income veteran families in permanent housing.

Action Taken: This bill was submitted for testimony, Letter of Support submitted 4/21/2021

Status: 6/16/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

What's Next: Pending Action by Committee

[Resolution No. 331: Support Housing Preference for Low-Income Veterans in the Department of Housing and Urban Development](#)

**H.R. 711 - West Los Angeles VA Campus Improvement Act of 2021:** This legislation would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) West Los Angeles Medical Center campus to use revenues from leases and easements as a dedicated funding source to build additional housing for homeless veterans, offset the high costs of housing construction, and help fund the provision of supportive services for veterans in the community.

Action Taken: This bill was submitted for testimony, Letter of Support submitted 4/21/2021

Status: 6/23/2021 - Became Public Law No: 117-18

What's Next:

**S. 2172 - Building Solutions for Veterans Experiencing Homelessness Act:** This bill improves grants, payments, and technical assistance provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to serve homeless veterans.

Action Taken: This bill was submitted for testimony, Letter of Support submitted 6/23/2021

Status: 07/28/2021 Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Ordered to be reported without amendment favorably

What's Next: Pending Action by Senate

[Resolution No. 319: Expanding Veterans Employment and Homeless Services within the Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

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## **SMALL BUSINESS & GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING PORTFOLIO**

**H.R.4433 - Veterans Entrepreneurship Act of 2021:** This bill would amend the Small Business Act to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to carry out a pilot program on issuing grants to eligible veterans to start or acquire qualifying businesses, and for other purposes. This bill would provide the opportunity for veterans to utilize their GI Bill benefits to start and finance their small businesses.

Action Taken: Supported by the National Commander in a Letter of Support submitted 08/03/2021

Status: 07/16/2021 Referred to the House Committee on Small Business

What's Next: Committee Vote

[Resolution No. 150: Expanding Post-9/11 GI Bill for Entrepreneurship](#)

**H.R. 2082 - VA Supply Chain Resiliency Act:** This bill would make certain improvements relating to the supply chain of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Action Taken: This bill was submitted for testimony, Letter of Support submitted 4/21/2021

Status: 5/4/2021 - Voted 22 - 6 by House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

What's Next: A full vote in the U.S. House

[Resolution No. 55: Mandatory use of the Veterans First Contracting Program](#)

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# GLOSSARY OF FREQUENTLY USED TERMS

Acronym	Definition
<b>ACE</b>	American Council on Education
<b>ACP</b>	American Corporate Partners, a veteran's support organization
<b>ATLAS</b>	Accessing Telehealth through Local Area Stations, a V.A. telehealth initiative
<b>BLS</b>	Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics
<b>C&amp;P</b>	V.A.'s Compensation and Pension exam
<b>CAVC</b>	Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims
<b>CCME</b>	Council of College and Military Educators
<b>COLA</b>	Cost-of-living adjustment
<b>CSAAVE</b>	California State Approving Agency for Veterans Education
<b>DIMO</b>	Defense Security Cooperation Agency/Defense Institute for Medical Operations
<b>DOD</b>	Department of Defense
<b>DOL-VETS</b>	Department of Labor, Veterans Employment and Training Services
<b>EdCounsel</b>	Higher education consulting firm
<b>EIDL</b>	SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loan
<b>GAO</b>	Government Accountability Office
<b>GPD</b>	V.A.'s Grant and Per Diem Program for homeless veterans
<b>GWB</b>	George W. Bush Higher Education Policy Work Group
<b>HEROES ACT of 2003</b>	Higher Education Relief Opportunities for Students Act of 2003. Grants the Secretary of Education the authority to waive requirements that impede military borrowers' access to critical repayment protection during the war, military operation, or national emergency.
<b>HVAC</b>	House Veterans Affairs Committee
<b>MCAI</b>	American Legion's Military Credentialing Advancement Initiative
<b>MSLP</b>	The Federal Reserve's Main Street Lending Program
<b>MSO</b>	Military Support Organization
<b>NAICU</b>	National Association of Independent Colleges & Universities
<b>NASAA</b>	National Association of State Approving Agencies. Responsible for approving school funding for GI Bill
<b>NAVPA</b>	National Association of Veterans Program Administrators
<b>NCA</b>	V.A.'s National Cemetery Administration
<b>NDAA</b>	National Defense Authorization Act
<b>NLD</b>	American Legion's National Legislative Division
<b>OPM</b>	Office of Personnel Management
<b>PPP</b>	Paycheck Protection Program
<b>RBS</b>	Risk-Based Survey Model
<b>RPIC</b>	Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge
<b>S2S</b>	Service to School, a veteran's organization
<b>SAA</b>	State Approving Agency, responsible for approving school funding for GI Bill
<b>SBA</b>	Small Business Administration
<b>STEM</b>	Science, Technology, Engineering, Medical
<b>SVA</b>	Student Veterans of America, a veteran's organization



<b>SVAC</b>	Senate Veterans Affairs Committee
<b>TAPS</b>	Transition Assistance Program for Survivors, a nonprofit for Gold Star Families
<b>TEAM Act</b>	Senate Bill 4393, to improve the provision of health care for veterans who were exposed to toxic substances from burn pits
<b>TFA</b>	American Legion's Temporary Financial Assistance program
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>USDA</b>	United States Department of Agriculture
<b>USERRA</b>	Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act
<b>VA&amp;R</b>	American Legion's Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division
<b>VACO</b>	Veterans Affairs Central Office
<b>VBA</b>	V.A.'s Veterans Benefits Administration
<b>VE&amp;E</b>	Veterans Employment and Education Division
<b>VES</b>	Veterans Education Success, a veteran's organization
<b>VSO</b>	Veterans Service Organization

# RESOURCE PAGE

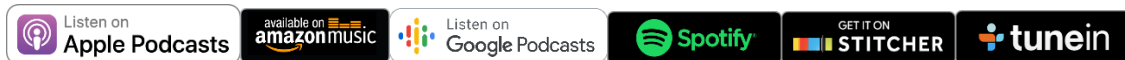
## ABOUT TANGO LIMA PODCAST

What happens when three veterans walk into a podcast studio? Vibrant camaraderie, playful joking and hot takes ensue. Join Mark Seavey, Ashley Gorbulja-Maldonado and Jeff Daly as they explore current events, interesting trends and quirky stories of interest to the military community.

The weekly podcast is produced by The American Legion.

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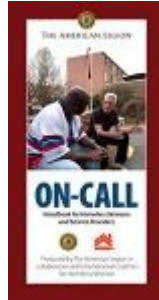


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## See our Publications



[Active-Duty Legal Rights](#)



[Homeless Veterans Handbook](#)



[The GI Bill and You](#)



[VA Home Loans Brochure](#)



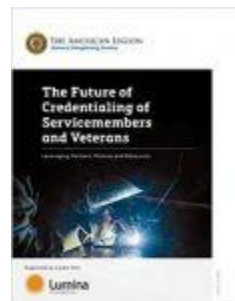
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[The State of Credentialing of Service Members and Veterans](#)



[The Future of Credentialing of Servicemembers and Veterans](#)

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## Awards Program



The first American Legion Veterans Employment & Education Commission award was established in 1947 and honored employers across the country who had established outstanding records in the employment and retention of veterans, disabled veterans, and older workers.

- Learn how to apply for these Awards at: <https://www.legion.org/careers/awards>
- For more information contact:  
**Edwin Cruz**  
(202) 263-5771  
[ecruz@legion.org](mailto:ecruz@legion.org)

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## Services That Really Help

Career fairs and workshops, guidance on education, homeless services, small business resources and more:



- **CAREER/EMPLOYMENT CENTER:**
  - <http://legion.monster.com/?scmdlCmscc=1>
  - <https://www.legion.org/careers/resources>
- **HOMELESS VETERANS FIND HELP:**
  - <https://www.legion.org/careers/homelesstaskforce>
  - <https://www.legion.org/homelessveterans/resources>
- **VETERANS EDUCATION BENEFITS:**
  - <https://www.legion.org/education/statebenefits>
  - <https://www.legion.org/education/federalbenefits>
- **VETERAN SMALL BUSINESS TOOLS:**
  - <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USSBA/bulletins/2eba258>

# MORE STORIES...

## **TIPS FOR VETERANS NAVIGATING THE JOB MARKET**

“The pandemic has changed the employment landscape as companies adapt to constant change. Even with an evolving job market, there are millions of available jobs, and three people are hired every minute on LinkedIn. To help navigate the job market, LinkedIn is offering Veterans some helpful tips in their employment search”

[Continue reading the article](#)

## **5 TIPS TO HELP YOU STOP PROCRASTINATING AND FACE UP TO TRANSITION**

““Why am I procrastinating about transition?” one of my military transition clients asked me recently. “It’s not like I don’t know it is coming. I can hear the clock ticking. Loudly. I know what I should be doing. But every Monday morning, I wake up and know that I have not done a thing about transition. Why can’t I stop procrastinating and just face up to it?”

[Continue reading the article](#)

## **CHANGES TO MAKE FEDERAL PROCUREMENT MORE EQUITABLE MISSING KEY INGREDIENTS**

“On one hand, more contracts and money are flowing to small and disadvantaged firms than ever before. In 2020, agencies spent more than \$145 billion on contracts to small businesses. That’s more than 26% of all federal contracting spending, and exceeds a small business contracting goal of 23%. Many experts expect 2021 data, when released, to continue to show increases in overall dollars”

[Continue reading the article](#)

## **HIGHER EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES AVAILABLE FOR VETERANS WITH DISABILITIES**

“As we come to the end of another year, many of us are making resolutions for 2022, including many Veterans who are resolving to return to the classroom to prepare for future careers outside of the military. Student Veterans come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences, and some may have disabilities associated with their time in service. Higher education support services may be available”

[Continue reading the article](#)

## **VETERANS ACCESSION HOUSE HELPS HOMELESS VETERANS FIND STABILITY, COMMUNITY IN CALIFORNIA CITY**

“For nearly two months, Kendrick Harrelson never left the fire restoration company where he worked. Literally. At night, he went into a back storage room, inflated an old air mattress and tried falling asleep while a small pinprick hole left his bed slowly sinking to the floor.

[Continue reading the article](#)

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