

# House Veterans Legislation Passes Senate

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**WASHINGTON, D.C.**—Today, one day before Veterans Day, the Senate passed the first two of 22 House-passed bills to spur job growth, including the VOW to Hire Heroes Act. Using the framework of the House-passed VOW Act, the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 is a bipartisan, bicameral bill to get America's nearly 1 million unemployed veterans back to work. The bill is expected to be taken up by the House next week.

"Today, America's veterans won. It was not politics as usual," stated Rep. Jeff Miller, Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. "I applaud the Senate on taking up this commonsense legislation that puts our veterans first and puts them on the path to gainful employment. As more and more of our service men and women come home, we need to ensure that they receive the homecoming they deserve, not an unemployment check. This legislation positions our veterans to be competitive in today's tough job market. A job arms our veterans with confidence and pride as they make the transition home, and also supports their families who have also sacrificed for our nation."

The latest Department of Labor unemployment report shows that in October 2011, the average unemployment rate among all veterans was 7.7% and 12.1% for veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Veterans between the ages of 35 and 64, the group with the highest financial obligations and the fewest available VA education and training options, continue to make up nearly two-thirds of all unemployed veterans. Overall, nearly one in twelve of our nation's heroes are out of work.

"I hope that today's display of bipartisanship will continue, and a special thanks to Senator Murray for her leadership in working with me to craft this compromise," said Miller. "I hope we don't stop here. The House has passed 13 bills to support America's veterans, 10 of which are still pending in the Senate. We must continue that work to provide programs that improve veterans' quality of life and honor our veterans every day of the year."

## **KEY PROVISIONS OF THE VOW TO HIRE HEROES ACT:**

- Expands education and training opportunities for older veterans by providing nearly 100,000 unemployed veterans of past eras and wars with up to 1-year of additional Montgomery GI benefits to go towards education or training programs at community colleges or technical schools for high-demand jobs.

- Makes the Transition Assistance Program (TAP)—an interagency workshop coordinated by Departments of Defense, Labor, and Veterans Affairs—mandatory for most service members moving on to civilian life to help them secure jobs in the 21st Century.
- Provides disabled veterans up to 1-year of additional Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Benefits.
- Works with the states to create licensing and credentialing standards to break down the barriers to find meaningful employment in their military occupations.
- Allows service members to begin the federal employment process prior to separation in order to facilitate a truly seamless transition from the military.
- Strengthens USERRA protections for service members in the workforce to clarify what constitutes a hostile work environment.
- Provides a tax credit of up to \$5,600 for hiring veterans who have been looking for a job for more than six months, as well as a \$2,400 credit for veterans who are unemployed for more than 4 weeks, but less than 6 months. Also provides a tax credit of up to \$9,600 for hiring veterans with service-connected disabilities who have been looking for a job for more than six months.

<http://veterans.house.gov/press-release/house-veterans-legislation-passes-senate>