



May 9, 2016

The Honorable Michael Michaud
Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training Service
U.S. Department of Labor
Room S1325
200 Constitution Ave. NW
Washington DC 20210

Dear Secretary Michaud:

We would like to congratulate you on your appointment and confirmation as Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training and look forward to working with you on veterans' employment issues especially those affecting veterans with disabilities.

The Veterans and Military Families Task Force is one of several Task Forces under the umbrella of the Consortium of Citizens with Disabilities (CCD). CCD is a coalition of national consumer, advocacy, provider, and professional organizations working together with, and on behalf of, the 57 million people with disabilities and their families living in the United States. This includes veterans who are living with disabilities both service and non-service related. CCD advocates for national public policy that ensures full equality, self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities, including veterans who have served our nation.

Our Task Force includes Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA); VetsFirst, a program of United Spinal Association); and Vietnam Veterans of America. Some of our other members are disability organizations that have robust veterans' programs such as Easter Seals and National Industries for the Blind (NIB). Others such as the National Disability Rights Network regularly assist veterans with disabilities through their programs. Several of these organizations are members of your stakeholder group.

We have reviewed the latest report submitted to Secretary Perez by the Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment and Training and Employer Outreach (ACVETEO) for 2015 and are supportive of the recommendations and issues in the report.

Our major interest and concern is to have a stronger focus on wounded warriors and disabled veterans both with and without disabilities related to military service. This concern aligns in part with the 2015 ACVETEO report which highlights three categories of veterans: women veterans,

veterans with disabilities, and Native American veterans. We wish to focus on veterans with disabilities.

For approximately two years VETS has had a strong focus on women veterans and established the DOL VETS Women Veteran Program which has made a significant impact on moving the employment issues for women veterans to the forefront. It has also established a blue print for a similar program focusing on veterans with disabilities. We encourage you to establish a DOL VETS Veterans with Disabilities Program with a Director. As an alternative, we would appreciate the appointment of a senior staff member to assume responsibility for veterans with disabilities.

We also encourage you to develop a strong working relationship with the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) as well as the Employment and Training Administration (ETA). A representative from each of these agencies should be a permanent part of and participant in your stakeholder meetings.

OFCCP has hosted several meetings with representatives of the CCD Employment and Training Task Force in which several members of the Veterans and Military Families Task Force have also participated. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss the implementation and compliance oversight of Section 503 and VEVRAA. VETS was not included in those but hopefully VETS and OFCCP will host future meetings to discuss these important issues.

Finally, we suggest you establish a “stakeholder” group consisting of employers and meet with them on a regular basis at least quarterly. Employers are interested in hiring veterans including veterans with disabilities but lack knowledge on specific programs and resources available to them. This would allow you an opportunity to develop a robust outreach initiative to educate employers and also be educated by employers on their concerns. A separate outreach to federal employers on hiring and retaining veterans with disabilities will also be critical.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your staff to discuss these important issues.

Sincerely,

Paralyzed Veterans of America
Easter Seals
American Association on Health and Disability
American Music Therapy Association
Brain Injury Association of America
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
National Disability Rights Network
Vietnam Veterans of America