



CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES

June 20, 2011

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Michael Enzi
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairman, Subcommittee on Employment and Workplace Safety
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Johnny Isakson
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Employment and Workplace Safety
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin, Ranking Member Enzi, Chairman Murray, and Ranking Member Isakson:

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Veterans Task Force is writing to convey our comments concerning the discussion draft of Title V of the proposed Workforce Investment Act (WIA) reauthorization.

Overall, the Veterans Task Force believes that reauthorization of WIA, including the Rehabilitation Act, provides a tremendous opportunity to ensure that our nation's veterans with significant disabilities are adequately integrated into the nation's workforce strategy. Unfortunately, the process being utilized to review the discussion draft of WIA is being carried out under timelines that cause us to fear that we are missing opportunities that would require additional consideration. We believe that it would be beneficial for the Committee to re-schedule the markup of this legislation after the August recess to ensure that this highly anticipated opportunity is not wasted.

With regard to the discussion draft of Title V, we have several recommendations that we believe will help to ensure that veterans, particularly those with disabilities that are not service-

connected, are able to benefit from the employment tools provided more generally for people with disabilities. Also, the unique needs of veterans and their ability in some cases to access services from both the Department of Veterans Affairs and through programs more broadly available to people with disabilities provides many opportunities but also the potential that individuals will fall through the cracks. We must ensure, when appropriate, that programs targeted more broadly to people with disabilities are also informed about the needs of veterans with disabilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments. The CCD Veterans Task Force is willing to assist the Committee in any way to serve veterans with disabilities. If you have any questions, please contact Heather Ansley, CCD Veterans Task Force Co-Chair, at (202) 556-2076, ext. 7702 or by e-mail at hansley@vetsfirst.org.

Sincerely,

Heather Ansley, VetsFirst, a program of United Spinal Association
Co-Chair

Susan Prokop, Paralyzed Veterans of America
Co-Chair

Leonard Selfon, Paralyzed Veterans of America
Co-Chair

Stakeholder Comment Form

Senate discussion draft of the Workforce Investment Act of 2011

This form should accompany your organization's comment letter. Please send both documents (as attachments to a single email) to ews@help.senate.gov no later than Monday, June 20th at 6:00pm.

Organization: CCD Veterans Task Force

One contact person: Heather Ansley

Contact email: hansley@vetsfirst.org

Contact phone number: 202-556-2076 Ext 7702

In order of priority, please provide a full description of each item highlighted in your organization's comment letter, including specific legislative references (e.g., Sec.

111(a)(1)(A)...), along with legislative language. Use additional pages as necessary.

**Below legislative references are based on the redline version received late afternoon on June

17. I have attached the version that we received to our submission.

- 1) Section 2. Findings; purpose; policy--We propose adding in (a) the following finding:
“Congress finds that many veterans with disabilities are accessing state vocational rehabilitation programs. While certain service-disabled veterans have access to vocational rehabilitation services under the Department of Veterans Affairs, many veterans with service-connected disabilities lose eligibility for those services after a period of time. Veterans with non-service-connected disabilities are those who honorably served their country and returned to civilian life and acquired disabilities outside their military service. Many of these veterans will thus rely on the state vocational rehabilitation system to restore them to competitive integrated employment and it is important that these veterans receive and benefit from all services and programs to which they are entitled.”
- 2) Title I, Part A, Section 101—We propose adding (a)(10)(C)(i)(III) to require the state plan to include “the number of individuals determined ineligible for vocational rehabilitation services by veteran status.”
- 3) Title I, Part A, Section 101—We propose adding (a)(10)(C)(ii)(XV) “the number of veterans referred to one-stop centers and number of veterans referred from such one-stop centers to designated state units and the outcomes of such referrals.”
- 4) Title I, Part A, Section 101—We propose adding (a)(11)(K) “COORDINATION WITH DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS REGIONAL OFFICE.-The state plan shall include an assurance that the designated state unit will coordinate activities with the appropriate programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that veterans served by the DSU receive any benefits under Title 38 to which they may be entitled.”
- 5) Title I, Part A, Section 102—We propose adding (b)(2)(A)(i) “in the case of individuals also entitled to benefits under Title 38, information on the availability and benefits under that title.”
- 6) Title I, Part A, Section 109—We propose adding (1)(i) “with respect to federal contractors, providing training and technical assistance regarding obligations under Section 503 and Section 4212 [Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act].”

- 7) Title I, Part A, Section 109—We propose adding in (4) “and additional incentives available for hiring veterans with disabilities;” following “accommodating individuals with disabilities.”
- 8) Title II, Section 202—We propose adding in (b)(8) “the Department of Veterans Affairs” to the list of federal agencies that Director of the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research must coordinate with in the production of statistical reports and studies on employment and employment related issues.
- 9) Title II, Section 203—Assuming that the disability and rehabilitation research summit referenced in (c)(1) includes representatives from the Department of Veterans Affairs, then it should be shared with the House and Senate Veteran’s Affairs Committees and other relevant committees with jurisdiction over the agencies that were a party to the summit. Thus, we propose adding “Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and of the House of Representatives” in (c)(3).
- 10) Title II, Section 204—We propose adding (a)(2)(B)(ix) “studies and analysis of special problems in returning to work faced by veterans with disabilities, especially those in rural area or with significant physical disabilities, traumatic brain injury, or post-traumatic stress disorder.”
- 11) Title II, Section 204—We propose adding in (b)(11), line 28, “veterans with disabilities” after “youth with disabilities.”
- 12) Title II, Section 204—We propose adding in (b)(17), line 20, “veterans with disabilities” after “American Indians with disabilities.”
- 13) Title III, Section 302—We propose adding (a)(4)(C) “to assist veterans with disabilities seeking assistance through one-stop delivery systems to obtain appropriate benefits from all programs to which they may be entitled.”
- 14) Title IV, Section 507—We propose adding in (a) “Secretary of Veterans Affairs” and Secretary of Defense.”
- 15) Title VII, Section 704—We propose adding (a)(3)(C)(ii)(IV) “programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs offering independent living and veteran-directed home and community based services to veterans with significant disabilities.”
- 16) Title VIII, Section 801—We propose adding in (d)(3) “individuals who receive VA pension for low income aged or disabled non-service-connected veterans and family members covered under 38 U.S.C. Sections 1501-1543.”
- 17) Title VIII, Section 802—We propose adding in (c)(1) “the Assistant Secretary for Veterans’ Employment and Training Service.”

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