

**From:** [March, Joseph H.](#)  
**To:** [Public Relations Division](#)  
**Subject:** Release: Legion asks Congress to investigate VETS state grant program  
**Date:** Thursday, March 03, 2011 1:52:12 PM  
**Importance:** High

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Legion asks Congress to investigate VETS state grant program**

WASHINGTON (March 3, 2011) – The American Legion has called upon Congress to initiate an investigation of the Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program, part of the Department of Labor’s Veterans Employment and Training Services (VETS).

The state-based Jobs for Veterans program was created to provide services and training for veterans seeking employment. The current jobless rate among veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan is 15.2 percent, two-thirds higher than the national rate of 9 percent.

Bob Madden, assistant director of The American Legion’s economic division, testified March 3 before the House Veterans’ Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity. He said while the Legion supports President Obama’s recommendation to fund the Jobs for Veterans program with \$166 million in fiscal 2012, it also “questions if the existing implementation of the program adequately supports the ultimate goal of employing veterans.”

In his written testimony, Madden said The American Legion contacted several states to gauge how they implement their state grant programs – including the use of staff positions for the Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veterans’ Employment Representatives (LVERs).

Madden said the Legion’s research “underscored an overall lack of consistency and implementation, including various open positions for DVOP/LVER’s, lack of funding for the program, limited resources provided to eligible veterans, and questionable responsibilities and duties of each DVOP/LVER.”

The American Legion believes a thorough and proper investigation of state grant programs will provide DoL-VETS with the information they need “in order to get the program back on track, and provide veterans with the best possible service,” Madden said.

In order to improve the state grant program, The American Legion offered several recommendations to the subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Marlin Stutzman, R-Ind.:

- Have the Government Accountability Office investigate and review inconsistencies in the program.
- Transfer all DVOP and LVER positions from state agencies to DoL-VETS for supervision and oversight.
- Appropriate \$166 million for the program.

- Provide adequate oversight and scrutiny to guarantee that grants are meeting the requirements and provisions of existing laws.

Madden said the program “has the potential to be an effective and successful means to provide transitioning service-connected disabled veterans, and other eligible veterans, gainful employment.”

-30-

Contact: Marty Callaghan at 202-263-5758/202-215-8644 or [mcallaghan@legion.org](mailto:mcallaghan@legion.org).