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## **American Legion Commander: Time for VOW is Now**

INDIANAPOLIS (October 12, 2011) – The American Legion is calling upon Congress to act now to help bring much needed aid to unemployed veterans seeking jobs. Later today, the House of Representatives will vote on H.R. 2344, The Veterans Opportunity to Work Act, or VOW Act, introduced this summer by Rep. Jeff Miller, Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee. With veteran jobless numbers totaling more than one million, with 632,000 of the unemployed being ages of 35-60, the situation could not be more dire for those who have answered the nation's call for defense, yet struggle to make ends meet in a flagging economy.

While the entire nation struggles with unemployment figures over 9 percent, veterans suffer disproportionately at rates sometimes two-thirds higher than the average for their civilian counterparts. Veterans of the ages 35-60 are particularly hard hit, needing re-training and other valuable job skills to be competitive in the job market. Miller's VOW Act provides training for all veterans, but is unique in because it specifically offers additional aid to this age group.

"Veterans aren't looking for a handout. They've served their country and just want the skills to make sure they can be competitive in the job market," American Legion National Commander Fang Wong said. "We all know the great intangibles veterans bring to employers. They're self starters and team players, who know how to get the job done in tough circumstances. All they need are some tools to help them get into that market and compete."

The VOW Act was passed by the House Veterans Affairs Committee with strong bipartisan support. With the focus of Americans everywhere on the job market, this bill could not be coming before Congress at a more vital juncture. "This is something that is going to be a big win for everyone," cites Wong. September 21, before a joint session of the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees, Wong praised the efforts of Miller and Chairman Patty Murray of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee on behalf of veterans, recognizing both their efforts to put forth legislation to get America's heroes back to work.

"The American Legion hopes you will collaborate and bring your parties together to

get a jobs bill for America's veterans passed," Wong said. "It is our obligation as a nation to ensure every single member of the military who chooses to leave the military can effectively transfer his or her education, training and experience into a civilian career field."

The American Legion is urging Americans to call their representatives in the House and let them know the time for VOW is NOW. This is a very consequential vote, and members of Congress need to show the veterans of America they will not be left behind in the job market. Having just returned from weeks of meetings on Capitol Hill with numerous members of Congress, Wong noted, "We hear every day how much this Congress cares about getting Americans back to work. We hear every day about how much they respect the sacrifices of our troops and want to make sure America pays its debt to these brave men and women. This is their chance to show the veterans they mean it."

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