From: March, Joseph H.
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jobless rate among young vets continues to climb

Unemployment "good news" does not extend to veterans

WASHINGTON (Jan. 10, 2011) - While America's overall unemployment rate has dropped to a 19-month low, the jobless rate among young military veterans continues to escalate alarmingly. Bureau of Labor Statistics figures released Jan. 7 showed a national unemployment rate of 9.4 percent in December, a drop of 0.4 percent from the previous month.

On the other hand, unemployment among veterans who have served in the Armed Forces since September 2001 rose from 10 percent in November to 11.7 percent in December.

"This disheartening trend demonstrates the continuing difficulty that veterans - especially young ones - are having in finding work in a job market composed primarily of non-veterans," said Jimmie Foster, national commander of The American Legion.

Foster said young veterans face job-seeking hardships for a number of reasons. "Primarily, employers resist hiring people - such as veterans - who have been out of the domestic workforce for an extended period of time. Besides that, some potential employers have difficulty understanding how specialized skills and expertise gained in the service translate into their own needs."

Most Iraq and Afghanistan veterans are men, 25 to 34 years old; 46 percent have some college education or an associate's degree, as compared with 28 percent of their nonveteran counterparts. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that "veterans from Gulf War-era II were *much less likely* to be high school dropouts (2 percent) than were nonveterans (14 percent).

"Clearly, young veterans are very attractive job candidates," Foster said. "And part of what The American Legion does is to communicate that fact to potential employers at job fairs, small business workshops, and other events we sponsor that help veterans get back into the civilian work force."

The American Legion, in partnership with RecruitMilitary.com, conducts a number of veterans job fairs nationwide throughout the year. Events are scheduled this month in Ft. Walton Beach, Fla. (13th), Tampa (20th) and Nashville (25th). A Legion-sponsored small business development workshop for veteran entrepreneurs who wish to do business with the federal government is set for March 22 in Washington.

Detailed information about job fairs and other assistance for job-seeking veterans is available online at The American Legion Career Center: <http://legion.monster.com/>.

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Media contact: Marty Callaghan at 202-263-5758/202-215-8644 or mcallaghan@legion.org <mailto:mcallaghan@legion.org>.