April 18, 2011

Honorable Bruce L. Braley, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
333 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Braley:

I respectfully submit the following responses to your additional questions from the Subcommittee hearing on *Veterans Employment and Training Service's Budget and State Grant Program* conducted on March 3, 2011:

1. **Should states that fail to meet the grant program requirements lose their funding?**

   The idea of taking away state grant program funds because states do not meet the minimal requirements sounds good in practice, but taking away veterans employment resources and opportunities does not help veterans in the long run. The State Grant program is monitored by DOL-VETS staff and produce quarterly reports for the agency to review. This process needs to be enhanced to show what the LVER/DVOPs are accomplishing. Identifying possible fraud of the State Grant Program should be monitored. Only after multiple attempts to eradicate any possible issues with no compliance by the states should the funding for the "Jobs for Veterans" State Grant Program be taken away.

2. **What are the major inconsistencies of the JVSG?**

   DVOPs provide disabled and eligible veterans with training opportunities and intensive services to meet their employment needs. In addition, LVERs provide outreach to employers as well as assist veterans in gaining employment by conducting job search workshops and establishing job search support groups. They also facilitate employment, training, and placement services to veterans. These responsibilities sound daunting, but states have relegated DVOP/LVERs to providing administrative tasks outside the scope of their job descriptions. The American Legion wants to see DVOP/LVERs performing their assigned duties and not providing additional support to their offices. With unemployment numbers continuing to rise for veterans of all wartime eras, especially the OEF/OIF era, it is imperative DVOP/LVERs fulfill their assigned duties.

   Congress should also ask, "Are we getting our return on investment?" with this program. To provide transparency that the states are accomplishing their efforts to provide eligible veterans with employment, a quarterly report needs to be developed in a format easily understood by all interested stakeholders.

3. **In your opinion, how effective is the DVOP/LVER program?**

   Based on our research the program is not operating at an effective level in all states and there seems to be an inadequate amount of data to easily and quantifiably demonstrate success/failure. As mentioned above, the program needs measurements that are adequate and easily understood. DVOP/LVERs understand their job and are passionate about servicing disabled and other eligible veterans, but the states are not necessarily focused on the same goals that DOL-VETS sees as priorities.

4. **Do you think the staffing and funding level for Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program Specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives is adequate to properly address the employment needs of our veterans population?**

   The American Legion has advocated for proper and adequate funding for the Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program. The American Legion does support the budget proposal for FY 2012, yet at the same time requests a more effective program, thereby increasing the number of eligible veterans who are receiving the specific resources to include job placement.

5. **Do you believe that more reports from VETS will improve VETS performance?**

   VETS will improve their performance when states improve their transparency and prove the effectiveness of their state grant program. Adding another report does not necessarily improve a program, unless it provides specific and definitive data that is useful to those who are responsible for measuring the program success.

Thank you for your continued commitment to America's veterans and their families.

Sincerely,

Robert Madden, Assistant Director
National Economic Commission

cc: Chairman Marlin Stutzman