THE AMERICAN LEGION
Veterans Strengthening America
WASHINGTON OFFICE
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April 20, 2023

The Honorable Mike Levin
1030 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20003

Representative Levin,

On behalf of the 1.6 million members of The American Legion, I would like to express support for H.R. 1786, Get Rewarding Outdoor Work for our Veterans Act (GROW). The GROW Act directs the Secretary of the Interior to administer a pilot program to employ veterans in positions that relate to conservation and resource management activities of the Department of the Interior, such as maintenance backlogs at national parks, conservation projects, and park management.

The American Legion has been a long-standing voice in promoting land and resource conservation. Through the formation of the Agriculture and Conservation Committee in 1950, The American Legion advocated the importance of conservation not only to assist veterans in finding gainful employment opportunities but to ensure the national security and welfare of our country. However, as of the fiscal year 2020, only 17.3% of Department of Interior employees were veterans, whereas veterans comprise 30.2% of employees at all other executive agencies. This legislation would address this challenge by bringing the best practices identified from the Department of Veterans' Affairs Warrior Training Advancement Course (WARTAC) pilot to bear on critical Department of Interior hiring shortages.

Through American Legion Resolution No. 316: Support Employment of Veterans in the Public and Private Workforce, we strongly support the Get Rewarding Outdoor Work for our Veterans Act, as currently written, as it creates precedence for best practices in order to foster future employment public sector employment pipelines established by agencies and departments that seek to employ veterans and transitioning service members. The American Legion sincerely appreciates your leadership on this legislation.

Sincerely,

Chanin Nuntavong
Executive Director
Government Affairs