The American Legion

OFFICE OF THE
NATIONAL COMMANDER

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September 8, 2014

Honorable Carl Levin, Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
SR-228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable James Inhofe, Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
SR-228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Levin and Ranking Member Inhofe:

On behalf of the 2.4 million members of The American Legion, I write to ask that Section 552 of the House-approved National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015, *Pilot Program to Assist Members of the Armed Forces in Obtaining Post-Service Employment,* not be included in the Senate version of that bill.

While we applaud efforts to assist transitioning servicemembers with employment, unfortunately we harbor serious concerns about using staffing agencies to assist those who are transitioning find employment.

Often public-private partnerships are productive and beneficial; however, in this case, The American Legion believes that the risks and problems associated with this approach outweigh any potential benefits for two primary reasons: accountability and redundancy.

While most of the staffing agencies that would be eligible to participate in the program established by this amendment are no doubt legitimate businesses who would truly seek to assist transitioning servicemembers, we are concerned that a lack of accountability for these agencies could lead to inconsistent results. Without appropriate accountability mechanisms, taxpayer dollars could see little return on investment.

Moreover, this amendment creates a program in the space already filled by the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVERs), which are

funded by federal dollars, administered by states, and tasked with assisting veterans in finding suitable employment. These programs have built-in accountability, and have a proven track record dating back many decades.

Because of this, The American Legion believes that transitioning servicemembers would be better served by enhancements to the already-existing programs rather than the establishment of new, unproven, and potentially ineffectual programs.

The American Legion looks forward to continuing to work with the committee on this important issue facing America's service members and veterans.

Respectfully,

MICHAEL D. HELM
National Commander

Cc: Chairman Howard McKeon
Ranking Member Adam Smith
House Armed Services Committee