

TO: HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

FROM: BRAD L. CHAMPLIN
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Chairman Smith, members of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and guests of the committee, good morning. My bank, my chairman and I are honored to come before you this morning to share our practice in employing veterans of our armed forces.

My name is Brad L. Champlin. I am executive vice president of Union Planters Corporation whose principal subsidiary is Union Planters Bank. I am here representing my bank, the Chairman and President of Union Planters Corporation, Jackson W. Moore, and myself. Let me say at the outset that none of the parties that I represent this morning are currently receiving or have received in the past two years any Federal grant or contract relevant to the subject matter of this testimony.

Next year will mark a 30-year career in banking for me. I spent the first 22 years with Leader Federal Bank, a large thrift in Tennessee, which was acquired by Union Planters in 1996. For most of my career I ran the retail side of the bank. Currently I coordinate the legislative activity for my bank and manage our Union Planters Community Foundation, a vehicle that allows us to contribute over \$4 million dollars every year to worthwhile charitable activities in the banking communities we serve. I also serve on a number of not-for-profit and for profit boards of directors, including the Navy League in our Memphis, Tennessee market.

Because of the nature of this committee I will highlight the military experience of both my chairman and myself. I served in the Army reserves during the Vietnam War and later transferred as a Lieutenant into the Navy reserves into a unit that, among other things, debriefed officers returning from Vietnam on their way to Washington D.C. For much of that time I

was also working and a student at the University of Southern California where I ultimately earned both my undergraduate and graduate degrees.

My wife of 40 years and I have four children. We are very proud that our number two son, Scott, is a veteran. He served for four years as a Ranger in the U.S. Army, and holds a purple heart for his service in Panama where he was a member of the crew that physically took Manuel Noriega out of the country. Scott returned to college to finish his degree after military service, graduating summa cum laud from the University of Memphis. After a four year stint with Auto Zone, where he progressed from a “grunt” to a district manager of loss prevention, he returned to graduate law school and is currently a corporate attorney for Ring Industrial Group. We’re thankful for the sense of responsibility Scott learned while in the military.

In addition to my bank, I am representing Jackson W. Moore who is the Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of Union Planters Corporation, and its lead bank subsidiary, Union Planters Bank. Mr. Moore sends his greetings to Chairman Smith and the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

Mr. Moore is an attorney by trade. He is active in religious, civic and educational organizations, serves on the Board of Trustee of Vanderbilt University, Asbury Theological Seminary, the Memphis/Shelby County Sports Authority, Memphis Tomorrow, the Executive Council of the Chickasaw Council of the Boy Scouts of America, and Youth Programs, the owner and producer of the FedEx Golf Tournament in Memphis benefiting St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital. Mr. Moore is currently Chairman of the Memphis Regional Chamber of Commerce, is a member of the World Presidents’ Organization and is on the Administrative Board of Christ United Methodist Church in Memphis.

Mr. Moore served on active duty in the United States military holding the rank of Captain in the United States Army and Army Reserves.

Union Planters Company is a New York Stock Exchange listed bank holding company doing business in every state in the United States, but with principal banking offices in Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Florida and Texas. Today we employ over 10,000 people with 745 banking offices and over 900

ATMs. We have announced a definitive merger agreement with Regions Bank that will create the 12th largest bank holding company nationwide, in terms of deposits. Mr. Moore will become Chief Executive Officer of the combined companies in June 2005 upon the retirement of Carl E. Jones, Jr. current president and CEO of Regions. Upon completion of the transaction, expected in June of this year, the new bank will employ approximately 20,000 people with 1,400 banking offices, 1,700 ATM's and the 140 brokerage offices of Morgan Keegan Company.

Mr. Moore serves on the Presidents National Hire Veterans Committee that was established by the Secretary of Labor and authorized by the Presidents Jobs for Veterans Act. Terry O'Mahoney from Texas chairs that committee. Mr. Moore is in sympathy with the committees' direction in attempting to create a "pull" for veterans to be employed in quality jobs throughout America's workforce instead of simply a "push" of the veteran into the workforce. We believe there is a disconnect, however, between Corporations who are positively disposed to hire veterans and the skilled veteran labor pool.

Our Executive Vice President for Human Resources is illustrative of that disconnect. Asked if Union Planters Bank hires veterans, our Human Resources director said, "yes we hire veterans, they are a wonderful addition to our workforce". But, the follow up question, "does the bank have any special programs targeted to recruit and hire veterans" resulted in a negative response. The head of our human resources does not know of any groups contacting our bank encouraging us to be proactive in hiring veterans, and furthermore, at this point, would not know were to go if we wanted to target a hire veterans program at the bank. Our state workforce development agencies are more passive than proactive.

The good news is that there is a positive connotation to the hiring of veterans. There is a belief that the veteran comes to the workforce with good training, and skills in working with and managing people. That the veteran will show up to work on time, have a good attitude and dress appropriate to the occasion. Mr. Moore believes there is another value in hiring a veteran. With all the attention on National security it is equally vital that corporations focus on safety and security in the workplace. The veteran comes to the workplace with skills that set them apart from ordinary employees when dealing in unexpected crisis situations.

We applaud Veterans Across America's initiative to reach out to corporate America with a campaign that encourages the hiring of veterans and believe that the "branding" campaign will help accomplish that objective. We would submit that to be effective the campaign should target, in addition to CEO's, directors of human resources, societies for human resources management ... in short, those in America's workplace that do the hiring. We need to find ways to point these people to the resources that are available to get them connected to veteran talent.

Our Nation has a great resource in our veterans, and frankly has expended billions of dollars to develop that talent. We do a great favor not only to our veterans but also to corporations, our Nation, and ourselves by finding ways to better utilize the veteran talent pool that exists. Jack Moore and I thank you for the time you've taken this morning to seek ways to help improve the quality of life for our veterans. And, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for the wonderful work you are doing for our country as elected representatives of this great Nation.