



*News From The ...*

## COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

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### Committee Looks to Solve Growing Guard Unemployment Rates

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Today, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity (EO) held an oversight hearing to hear from the National Guard Adjutants Generals from Indiana, Iowa, and Tennessee on their efforts to reduce the unemployment rate amongst National Guardsmen. Federal officials from the Departments of Labor, Defense, and the Employer Support for the Guard and Reserves also presented their views.

Rep. Marlin Stutzman (IN-03), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, highlighted many of the existing education, training, and job placement programs that are key resources designed to reduce the high unemployment rate of our Guard and Reservists. Citing the Training Assistance Program (TAP), a vital component of the [VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011](#), as an example, Chairman Stutzman discussed the importance of increased coordination between federal, state, and local governments, business, and non-profit resources as essential to decreasing the unemployment rate. Noting numerous programs, Stutzman stated, “We have all these programs to help members of the National Guard and Reserves get the skills they need to get a good job but the unemployment rates are still too high. We must first ask: what can we do to get our economy going? Second, are we using the programs currently in place in the most effective way to give our Guard and Reserve the tools to transition?”

In testimony, the Manufacturing Institute stated that over 600,000 manufacturing jobs are going unfilled because of skill shortages. Chairman Stutzman responded by saying, “it is clear that the jobs are there, but we are going to have to use innovative solutions to make sure that Guardsmen have the skill sets required to fill these positions. I know that many companies work with community colleges to develop the skills needed in their company and I suspect that expanding that model is an area we need to explore further.”

Problems facing members of the Guard and Reserves returning home include a failure by employers to comply with provisions in the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), poor coordination of employment services by local agencies, and a lack of understanding of the resources available to servicemembers. “After we get our economy going again, the key to reducing these unemployment rates is to focus on local services, make use of all the federal and state education and training benefits that have been put in place to assist servicemembers, and more effectively inform transitioning servicemembers of the resources available.”

“As the owner of a small business, I understand the pressures that the loss of a critical employee creates. But, in the end, I always ask who makes the greater sacrifice, the employer or the service member who is literally going in to harm’s way and that member’s family who must cope with all the stresses of a deployment?”

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