H.R. 2494: The Veterans' Education, Transition, and Opportunity Prioritization Plan (VET OPP) Act

Background:

VA education and employment benefits give veterans the opportunity to use the unique skills they gained during military service to find meaningful civilian careers. The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) is responsible for distributing these benefits as well as many others. However, the bulk of VBA's staff supports disability, compensation, and pension benefits claims. As a result, benefits that support economic opportunity through education and employment are often understaffed and transitioning servicemembers and veterans wait longer to receive them. For example, the lack of a single individual responsible for economic opportunity benefits led to massive housing payment delays to student veterans and their dependents during the implementation of the Forever GI Bill in 2018.

The VET OPP Act would create a Fourth Administration at VA that is solely focused on all economic opportunity and transition programs. This would align transition assistance programs, education programs, and employment programs in one place and give them the attention and prioritization they deserve. The new Fourth Administration would be led by an Under Secretary for Economic Opportunity and Transition that would be solely responsible for the success of these programs. This would allow VA to better support transitioning servicemembers and veterans who are seeking education, employment, and the opportunity to pursue the American dream.

The Message:

- Ensuring transitioning servicemembers and veterans have the tools they need to succeed after the military is one of Congress' highest callings.
- The VET OPP Act would ensure that VA is properly overseeing, staffing, and prioritizing economic opportunity programs.
- The VET OPP Act will modernize VA and help set veterans up for success in the civilian world.