

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON **VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

REPUBLICANS | RANKING MEMBER MIKE BOST

H.R. 2523: The Training in High-Demand Roles to Improve Veteran Employment (THRIVE) Act

Background:

Before COVID-19 upended the American economy, veteran unemployment had fallen to a near-record low. A year later, it is more than double what it once was. Approximately half a million veterans are out of work as of March 2021. Congress took meaningful steps to support veterans who lost their jobs due to the pandemic in the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 and with the inclusion of the Veterans Economic Recovery Act in the American Rescue Plan. The Veterans Economic Recovery Act, in particular, created the Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program (VRRAP) to help unemployed veterans and members of the National Guard and Reserve get the training they need to compete in the post-pandemic economy.

The THRIVE Act would make a number of improvements to VRRAP so that more veterans can benefit from it. For example, to ensure VRRAP participation results in meaningful employment, it would require the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Labor to work together to provide employment placement services to program participants and to update the in-demand occupations list. It would also make meaningful changes to how VA pays schools who are providing VRRAP training. In addition, the THRIVE Act would make certain technical corrections to the education and employment provisions of the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020.

The Message:

- COVID-19 caused the near-record low veteran unemployment rate to skyrocket.
- Congress has acted to help veterans who are out of work because of the pandemic get back on their feet.
- The THRIVE Act would ensure that the additional authorities and funding Congress provided for unemployed veterans work as intended to help veterans in need find good, well-paying jobs.