To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a retraining assistance program for unemployed veterans, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on ________________

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a retraining assistance program for unemployed veterans, and for other purposes.

1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

4 This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Economic
5 Recovery Act of 2020”.

SEC. 2. COVID-19 VETERAN RAPID RETRAINING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a program under which the Secretary shall provide up to 12 months of retraining assistance to an eligible veteran for the pursuit of a covered program of education. Such retraining assistance shall be in addition to any other entitlement to educational assistance or benefits for which a veteran is, or has been, eligible.

(b) ELIGIBLE VETERANS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this section, the term “eligible veteran” means a veteran who—

(A) as of the date of the submittal of the application for assistance under this section, is at least 25 years of age but not more than 60 years of age;

(B) as of the date of the submittal of the application for assistance under this section, is unemployed by reason of the covered public health emergency, as certified by the veteran;

(C) as of the date of the submittal of the application for assistance under this section, is not eligible to receive educational assistance under chapter 30, 31, 32, 33, or 35 of title 38, United States Code, or chapter 1606 or 1607 of title 10, United States Code;
(D) is not enrolled in any Federal or State jobs program;

(E) is not in receipt of compensation for a service-connected disability rated totally disabling by reason of unemployability; and

(F) will not be in receipt of unemployment compensation (as defined in section 85(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986), including any cash benefit received pursuant to subtitle A of title II of division A of the Cares Act (Public Law 116–136), as of the first day on which the veteran would pursue a program of education using retraining assistance under this section.

(2) Treatment of veterans who transfer entitlement.—For purposes of paragraph (1)(C), a veteran who has transferred all of the veteran’s entitlement to educational assistance under section 3319 of title 38, United States Code, shall be considered to be a veteran who is not eligible to receive educational assistance under chapter 33 of such title.

(3) Failure to complete.—A veteran who receives retraining assistance under this section to pursue a program of education and who fails to com-
plete the program of education shall not be eligible
to receive additional assistance under this section.

(c) COVERED PROGRAMS OF EDUCATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Each eligible veteran who
receives retraining assistance under this section may
only use such assistance to pursue a program of
education (as such term is defined in section
3452(b) of title 38, United States Code) for train-
ing, on a full-time or part-time basis, that—

(A) that—

(i) is approved under chapter 36 of
such title;

(ii) does not lead to a bachelors or
graduate degree; and

(iii) is designed to provide training for
a high-demand occupation, as determined
under paragraph (2); or

(B) is a high technology programs of edu-
cation offered by a qualified provider, under the
meaning of such terms in section 116 of the
Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational As-
sistance Act of 2017 (Public Law 115–48; 38

(2) ACCREDITED PROGRAMS.—In the case of an
accredited program of education, the program of
education shall not be considered a covered program of education under this section if the program has received a show cause order from the accreditor of the program during the five-year period preceding the date of the enactment of this Act.

(3) **Determination of high-demand occupations.**—

(A) **Initial implementation.**—In carrying out this section, the Secretary shall use the list of high-demand occupations compiled by the Commissioner of Labor Statistics until the final list under subparagraph (C) is complete.

(B) **Study required.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall enter into an agreement with a federally funded research and development corporation or another appropriate non-Department entity for the conduct of a study to determine which occupations are high-demand occupations. Such study shall be completed not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(C) **Final list.**—The Secretary—

(i) may add or remove occupation from the list in use pursuant to subparagraph (A) during the 60-day period fol-
lowing the completion of the study required
by subparagraph (B);

(ii) shall issue a final list of high-de-
demand occupations for use under this sec-
tion by not later than 60 days after the
date of the completion of the study; and

(iii) shall make such final list publicly
available on a website of the Department.

(D) USE OF LIST.—The Secretary shall
use the list developed under this paragraph in
order to apply the requirement that retraining
assistance under this section is used for train-
ing for a high-demand occupation, but the Sec-
retary may remove occupations from the list as
the Secretary determines appropriate.

(d) AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE.—

(1) RETRAINING ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary
of Veterans Affairs shall provide to an eligible vet-
neran pursuing a covered program of education under
the retraining assistance program under this section
an amount equal to the amount of educational as-
sistance payable under section 3313(c)(1)(A) for
each month the veteran pursues the covered pro-
gram of education. Such amount shall be payable di-
rectly to the educational institution offering the cov-
ered program of education pursued by the veteran as follows:

(A) 50 percent of the total amount payable shall be paid when the eligible veteran begins the program of education.

(B) 25 percent of the total amount payable shall be paid when the eligible veteran completes the program of education.

(C) 25 percent of the total amount payable shall be paid when the eligible veteran finds employment in a field related to the program of education.

(2) FAILURE TO COMPLETE.—In the case of a veteran who pursues a covered program of education under the retraining assistance program under this section, but who does not complete the program of education, the Secretary shall pay to the educational institution offering such program of education a prorated amount based on the number of months the veteran pursued the program of education—

(A) under paragraph (1)(B), which shall be payable when the veteran provides notice to the educational institution that the veteran no longer intends to pursue the program of education; and
(B) under paragraph (1)(C), which shall
by payable only if the veteran finds employment
in a field related to the program of education
during the 180-day period beginning on the
date on which the veteran withdraws from the
program of education.

(3) Housing Stipend.—For each month that
an eligible veteran pursues a covered program of
education under the retraining assistance program
under this section, the Secretary shall pay to the
veteran a monthly housing stipend in an amount
equal to—

(A) in the case of a covered program of
education leading to a degree at an institution
of higher learning (as that term is defined in
section 3452(f) of title 38, United States Code)
pursued on more than a half-time basis, the
amount specified under subsection (c)(1)(B) of
section 3313 of title 38, United States Code;

(B) in the case of a covered program of
education other than a program of education
leading to a degree at an institution other than
an institution of higher learning pursued on
more than a half-time basis, the amount speci-
fied under subsection (g)(3)(A)(ii) of such section;

(C) in the case of a covered program of education pursued on less than a half-time basis, the amount specified under subsection (f)(2)(A)(ii) of such section; or

(D) in the case of a covered program of education pursued solely through distance learning on more than a half-time basis, the amount specified under subsection (c)(1)(B)(iii) of such section.

(4) FAILURE TO FIND EMPLOYMENT.—The Secretary shall not make a payment under paragraph (1)(C) with respect to an eligible veteran who completes or fails to completes a program of education under the retraining assistance program under this section if the veteran fails to find employment in a field related to the program of education within the 180-period beginning on the date on which the veteran withdraws from or completes the program.

(c) NO TRANSFERABILITY.—Retraining assistance provided under this section may not be transferred to another individual.

(f) EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE.—
(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Labor shall contact each veteran who pursues a covered program of education under this section—

(A) not later than 30 days after the date on which the veteran begins the program of education to notify the veteran of the availability of employment placement services upon completion of the program; and

(B) not later than 14 days after the date on which the veteran completes, or terminates participation in, such program to facilitate the provision of employment placement services to such veteran.

(2) PROVISION OF INFORMATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall provide to the Secretary of Labor such information as may be necessary to carry out paragraph (1).

(g) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may enter into a memorandum of understanding with one or more qualified nonprofit organizations for the purpose of facilitating the employment of veterans who participate in the retraining assistance program under this section.
(2) QUALIFIED NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION.—

For purposes of this subsection, a qualified nonprofit organization is a nonprofit organization that—

(A) is an association of businesses; and

(B) has at least two years of experience providing job placement services for veterans.

(h) FOLLOW UP OUTREACH.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in coordination with the Secretary of Labor shall contact each veteran who completes a covered program of education under the retraining assistance program under this section 30, 60, 90, and 180 days after the veteran completes such program of education to ask the veteran about the experience of the veteran in the retraining assistance program and the veteran’s employment status.

(i) TIME FRAME FOR PARTICIPATION.—An eligible veteran who participates in the retraining assistance program under this section shall—

   (1) begin a program of education by not later than 150 days after the date of the enactment of this Act; and

   (2) complete such program of education by not later than 17 months after the date of the enactment of this Act.
(j) LIMITATION.—Not more than 35,000 eligible veterans may receive retraining assistance under this section.

(k) TERMINATION.—No retraining assistance may be paid under this section after the date that is 17 months after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(l) GAO REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the termination of the retraining assistance program under subsection (k), the Comptroller General shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report on the outcomes and effectiveness of the program.

(m) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term “covered public health emergency” means the declaration—

(A) of a public health emergency, based on an outbreak of COVID-19 by the Secretary of Health and Human Services under section 319 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 247d); or

(B) of a domestic emergency, based on an outbreak of COVID-19 by the President, the Secretary of Homeland Security, or State, or local authority.

(2) The term “veteran” means—
(A) a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable; or

(B) a member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces who serves on active duty pursuant to section 502(f) of title 32, United States Code, for a period of 30 days or longer by reason of the covered public health emergency.

(n) FUNDING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—For each fiscal year for which the Secretary provides retraining assistance under this section, such sums as may be necessary shall be made available for such assistance from funds appropriated to, or otherwise made available to, the Department for the payment of readjustment benefits.

(2) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary $10,000,000 for administrative costs associated with carrying out this section.
SEC. 3. ACCESS FOR THE SECRETARIES OF LABOR AND VETERANS AFFAIRS TO THE FEDERAL DIRECTOR OF NEW HIRES.

Section 453A(h) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 653a(h)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(4) Veteran employment.—The Secretaries of Labor and of Veterans Affairs shall have access to information reported by employers pursuant to subsection (b) of this section for purposes of tracking employment of veterans.”.

SEC. 4. EXPANSION OF ELIGIBLE CLASS OF PROVIDERS OF HIGH TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS OF EDUCATION FOR VETERANS.

Section 116 of the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 (Public Law 115–48; 38 U.S.C. 3001 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b), by adding at the end the following: “The Secretary shall treat an individual as an eligible veteran if the Secretary determines that the individual shall become an eligible veteran fewer than 180 days after the date of such determination.”;

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (3)(A), by striking “has been operational for at least 2 years” and in-
serting “employs instructors whom the Secretary determines are experts in their respective fields in accordance with paragraph (6)”; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(6) EXPERTS.—The Secretary shall determine whether instructors are experts under paragraph (3)(A) based on evidence furnished to the Secretary by the provider regarding the ability of the instructors to—

“(A) identify professions in need of new employees to hire, tailor the programs to meet market needs, and identify the employers likely to hire graduates;

“(B) effectively teach the skills offered to eligible veterans;

“(C) provide relevant industry experience in the fields of programs offered to incoming eligible veterans; and

“(D) demonstrate relevant industry experience in such fields of programs.”;

(3) in subsection (d), in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting “(not including an individual described in the second sentence of subsection (b))” after “each eligible veteran”;
(4) in subsection (e), in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting “, including a part-time program shorter than six months in duration,” after “means a program of education”;  
(5) in subsection (g), by striking “$15,000,000” and inserting “$45,000,000”; and  
(6) by adding at the end the following new subsection (i):  
“(i) Prohibition on Certain Accounting of Assistance.—The Secretary may not consider enrollment in a high technology program of education under this section to be assistance under a provision of law referred to in section 3695 of title 38, United States Code.”.

SEC. 5. PILOT PROGRAM FOR OFF-BASE TRANSITION TRAINING FOR VETERANS AND SPOUSES.  
(a) Extension of Pilot Program.—Subsection (a) of section 301 of the Dignified Burial and Other Veterans’ Benefits Improvement Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–260; 10 U.S.C. 1144 note) is amended—  
(1) by striking “During the two-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act” and inserting “During the 5-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of the Veterans Economic Recovery Act of 2020”; and
(2) by striking “to assess the feasibility and ad-
visability of providing such program to eligible indi-
viduals at locations other than military installa-
tions”.

(b) LOCATIONS.—Subsection (c) of such section is
amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking “not less than
three and not more than five States” and inserting
“not fewer than 50 locations in States (as defined
in section 101 of title 38, United States Code)”;

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking “at least two”
and inserting “at least 20”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new
paragraphs:

“(5) PREFERENCES.—In selecting States for
participation in the pilot program, the Secretary
shall provide a preference for any State with—

“(A) a high rate of usage of unemployment
benefits for recently separated members of the
Armed Forces; or

“(B) a labor force or economy that has
been significantly impacted by the covered pub-
lic health emergency.
“(6) COVERED PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY.—

In this subsection, the term ‘covered public health
eMERGENCY’ means the declaration—

“(A) of a public health emergency, based

on an outbreak of COVID-19 by the Secretary

of Health and Human Services under section

319 of the Public Health Service Act (42

U.S.C. 247d); or

“(B) of a domestic emergency, based on an

outbreak of COVID-19 by the President, the

Secretary of Homeland Security, or State, or

local authority.”.

(c) ANNUAL REPORT.—Subsection (e) of such section

is amended by adding at the end the following new sen-
tence: “Each such report shall include information about

the employment outcomes of the eligible individuals who

received such training during the year covered by the re-

port.”.

(d) CONFORMING REPEAL.—Subsection (f) of such

section is repealed.
SEC. 6. GRANTS FOR PROVISION OF TRANSITION ASSISTANCE TO MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES AFTER SEPARATION, RETIREMENT, OR DISCHARGE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall make grants to eligible organizations for the provision of transition assistance to members of the Armed Forces who are separated, retired, or discharged from the Armed Forces, and spouses of such members.

(b) USE OF FUNDS.—The recipient of a grant under this section shall use the grant to provide to members of the Armed Forces and spouses described in subsection (a) resume assistance, interview training, job recruitment training, and related services leading directly to successful transition, as determined by the Secretary.

(c) ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS.—To be eligible for a grant under this section, an organization shall submit to the Secretary an application containing such information and assurances as the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Labor, may require.

(d) PRIORITY.—In making grants under this section, the Secretary shall give priority to an organization that—

(1) provides multiple forms of services described in subsection (b); or

(2) is located in a State with—

(A) a high rate of veteran unemployment;
(B) a high rate of usage of unemployment benefits for recently separated members of the Armed Forces; or

(C) a labor force or economy that has been significantly impacted by the covered public health emergency (as such term is defined in section 2(m)(2)).

(e) AMOUNT OF GRANT.—A grant under this section shall be in an amount that does not exceed 50 percent of the amount required by the organization to provide the services described in subsection (b).

(f) DEADLINE.—The Secretary shall carry out this section not later than six months after the effective date of this Act.

(g) TERMINATION.—The authority to provide a grant under this section shall terminate on the date that is five years after the date on which the Secretary implements the grant program under this section.

(h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated $10,000,000 to carry out this section.