

# CONGRESSIONAL VETERANS JOBS CAUCUS

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, just over a year ago my good friend, Senator MARK KIRK of Illinois, and I launched a new caucus in the Senate. Our purpose was to bring attention to the problem of unemployment among our military veterans. Mark and I looked at everything the Department of Veterans Affairs and other government agencies were doing to help veterans find jobs. We believed the private sector needed to be more involved, so we created the Senate Veterans Jobs Caucus.

Today, the Senate Veterans Jobs Caucus is the Congressional Veterans Jobs Caucus. It is a bicameral, bipartisan group of 37 Senators and 46 House Members brought together by a shared commitment to the newest generation of veterans.

This week we are kicking off the caucus's activities for the 113th Congress with a "Day on The Hill." It is an event highlighting our work on behalf of veterans, and particularly our show-case program, "I Hire Veterans."

Not only will we be recruiting more Members of Congress to join our caucus, but we will also be enlisting more businesses to join the eight major corporate partners that have already joined our ranks. These corporations expect to hire about 200,000 veterans in the next 5 years.

The members of the Congressional Veterans Jobs Caucus are leading by example. We are hiring veterans to work in our Senate and House offices. My colleagues will probably see the signs as they go by our offices that say "I Hire Veterans." It is a logo displayed proudly in our offices—the same logo my colleagues will see in the businesses that share our commitment to veterans.

Our I Hire Veterans Program is basically our new yellow ribbon, a special welcome home and a commitment to serve those who have served our country in the most difficult and dangerous circumstances.

There is no sugarcoating the fact that the job market is tough, especially for our young veterans. Unemployment among these veterans has reached crisis proportions according to the latest data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Listen to these figures, if my colleagues will. They are astonishing. For veterans 18 to 24 years of age, their unemployment rate is 31.3 percent—31 percent. Even more staggering is the jobless rate for female veterans in that same age bracket of 18 to 24, and that is over 55 percent unemployment. The employment situation isn't much better for the National Guard and Reserves because employers are reluctant to hire somebody who may be subject to being called to duty, and this generation of National Guardsmen and Reserves are coming home from a decade of repeated deployment that, in many cases, interrupted or delayed their careers or education. Many of them are just now realizing how difficult it can be to jumpstart school or a career.

If we don't do something it is going to get worse. With more than 100,000 service men and women expected to re-enter civil life each year over the next 5 years, their challenge to find jobs is only going to intensify. Listen to the veterans, and we would be surprised when they tell us that sometimes the stress of finding a job in a tough economy can match the stress of combat in some of the most dangerous and distant places in the world.

Imagine for a moment that you are 21 and just back from the rugged streets of Kandahar, reunited with your family, and you are going up and down the streets of your hometown looking for a job week after week with no luck at all. That is real stress. That is pressure, and that is what more than 3 out of 10 of our young veterans are experiencing right now as we speak.

Like every generation of American warriors before them, today's veterans make great hires. They lead by example. They understand teamwork. They are flexible and open to change. They are tech savvy. And talk about performing under pressure—even in the most stressful situations, with limited resources, they get the job done.

After World War II, with the millions of American GIs returning home, President Harry Truman appointed GEN Omar Bradley to run the Veterans' Administration. Bradley was a popular choice, and his steely approach to helping veterans was widely admired. Bradley's marching orders to the VA were simple: "We are dealing with veterans, not procedures, with their problems, not ours."

You will find that same kind of commitment to today's generation of veterans in the Congressional Veterans Jobs Caucus.

It is simply unacceptable that when the courageous Americans who fight our wars finally get to come home, they have to fight for jobs. The Congressional Veterans Jobs Caucus is committed to making sure that does not happen.

America has said it is time to bring our troops home. After a decade of war and incredible sacrifice by our warriors, the homecomings are well underway. It is not always easy to come home from war. But the homecoming will be easier if we fulfill our obligations, and that includes making sure our fighting men and women come home to a job.

After all, as General Bradley said: "We are dealing with veterans, not procedures, with their problems, not ours."

I would ask all of my colleagues here—we have 37 of our Senators signed up to this Veterans Jobs Caucus—I would hope we would have 100, and we are going to be working hard for that. I want to thank my good friend Senator MARK KIRK from Illinois for helping launch this. We have worked together. We will continue to work with all of our Senators. We appreciate and thank you.

• Mr. KIRK. Mr. President, more than 2 million Americans have served our

Nation in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other post-9/11 missions around the world. Now, as these men and women return home, they are confronting yet another challenge—finding a job.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, unemployment among younger veterans has reached staggering proportions. Nearly one-third of all veterans aged 18–24—and more than half of female veterans in that range—are unemployed.

Roughly 800,000 veterans call Illinois home. And in 2010, Illinois' veteran unemployment rate was the fourth highest in the country.

That is why I joined with my good friend and colleague, Senator JOE MANCHIN (D-WV), in forming the Congressional Veterans Jobs Caucus. And 1 year later, 35 Senators and 46 Representatives from across the political spectrum have joined the effort.

We are bringing together government and business leaders, veteran service organizations, and educational institutions to identify solutions to reduce vets' unemployment. And I am proud to report that several Illinois employers, such as State Farm and Caterpillar are stepping up to help.

At a time when so many see a divided government, we owe it to our veterans to cast aside our differences and work across the aisle to help solve this problem. •

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A FILIBUSTER AND A MOTION TO CUT OFF DEBATE

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I come to the floor to attempt to clear up some confusion about Senate procedure. The confusion I wish to address is that some observers of the Senate seem to have a hard time telling the difference between a filibuster that is designed to kill the nomination of a Cabinet member or a judge and a motion by the majority leader to cut off debate. Let me say that again—the difference between a filibuster that is designed to prevent the nomination of a Cabinet member or a judge on one hand or a motion by the majority leader of the Senate to cut off debate.

There is a big difference. But sometimes I read in the newspapers that Republicans are filibustering, for example, Senator Hagel, as if a majority of Republicans or a majority of the Senate intended to deny the confirmation of Senator Hagel through a filibuster, when, in fact, what most of the Republicans were saying was: The nomination of the former Senator has come to the floor only 2 days ago. We have Senators who have legitimate questions about the nomination, and we wish to have some time to discuss it.

In that case, we were forced to have a vote on a motion by the majority leader to cut off debate on Thursday before the recess, even though the