

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1218

To promote Federal employment for veterans, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 24, 2017

Ms. HEITKAMP (for herself, Mr. SULLIVAN, and Ms. HARRIS) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To promote Federal employment for 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 “Empowering Federal
5 Employment for Veterans Act of 2017” or the “Empow-
6 ering FED Vets Act”.

7 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF VETERANS EMPLOYMENT PRO-**
8 **GRAMS IN FEDERAL AGENCIES.**

9 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

10 (1) the term “covered agency” means—

- 1 (A) the Department of State;
- 2 (B) the Department of the Treasury;
- 3 (C) the Department of Defense;
- 4 (D) the Department of Justice;
- 5 (E) the Department of the Interior;
- 6 (F) the Department of Agriculture;
- 7 (G) the Department of Commerce;
- 8 (H) the Department of Labor;
- 9 (I) the Department of Health and Human
- 10 Services;
- 11 (J) the Department of Housing and Urban
- 12 Development;
- 13 (K) the Department of Transportation;
- 14 (L) the Department of Energy;
- 15 (M) the Department of Education;
- 16 (N) the Department of Veterans Affairs;
- 17 (O) the Department of Homeland Security;
- 18 (P) the Environmental Protection Agency;
- 19 (Q) the National Aeronautics and Space
- 20 Administration;
- 21 (R) the Agency for International Develop-
- 22 ment;
- 23 (S) the General Services Administration;
- 24 (T) the National Science Foundation;
- 25 (U) the Nuclear Regulatory Commission;

1 (V) the Office of Personnel Management;
2 (W) the Small Business Administration;
3 (X) the Social Security Administration;
4 and
5 (Y) any other Executive agency (as defined
6 in section 105 of title 5, United States Code)
7 that the President may designate;

8 (2) the term “transitioning member of the
9 Armed Forces” means a member of the Armed
10 Forces who is expected to be discharged or released
11 from active duty in the Armed Forces within 180
12 days; and

13 (3) the term “veterans employment official”
14 means—

15 (A) the head of a Veterans Employment
16 Program Office established under subsection
17 (b)(1)(A); and

18 (B) an employee designated to carry out a
19 Veterans Employment Program for a covered
20 agency under subsection (b)(1)(B).

21 (b) VETERANS EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS.—The head
22 of a covered agency shall—

23 (1)(A) establish or maintain a Veterans Em-
24 ployment Program Office within the covered agency;
25 or

1 (B) designate an employee of the covered agen-
2 cy who shall have full-time responsibility for carrying
3 out a Veterans Employment Program for the cov-
4 ered agency; and

5 (2) ensure the public availability of contact in-
6 formation for veterans employment officials to en-
7 sure engagement with prospective applicants.

8 (c) RESPONSIBILITIES.—A veterans employment offi-
9 cial of a covered agency shall—

10 (1) enhance employment opportunities for vet-
11 erans within the agency, consistent with law and
12 merit system principles, including by developing and
13 implementing—

14 (A) the agency's plan for promoting em-
15 ployment opportunities for veterans;

16 (B) veterans recruitment programs; and

17 (C) training programs for veterans with
18 disabilities;

19 (2) coordinate and provide employment coun-
20 seling and training programs to prospective appli-
21 cants to help match the skills and career aspirations
22 of veterans to the needs of the agency, targeting
23 high-demand Federal occupations that are projected
24 to have heavy recruitment needs;

1 (3) participate in skills-based, cross-govern-
2 mental, and individual agency career development
3 programs to leverage those programs in matching
4 veterans' career aspirations with high-growth occu-
5 pations; and

6 (4) provide mandatory annual training to
7 human resources employees and hiring managers of
8 the agency concerning veterans' employment, includ-
9 ing training on veterans' preferences and special au-
10 thorities for the hiring of veterans.

11 (d) COORDINATION BY OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MAN-
12 AGEMENT.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the Office of
14 Personnel Management shall facilitate coordination
15 among veterans employment officials, including ap-
16 propriate sharing of resources and information to
17 help match the skills and career aspirations of vet-
18 erans to the needs of the agencies.

19 (2) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Director of the
20 Office of Personnel Management shall—

21 (A) establish a Veterans Program Office to
22 provide Government-wide leadership in recruit-
23 ment and employment of veterans in the execu-
24 tive branch of the Federal Government;

1 (B) regularly convene veterans employment
2 officials for working-level meetings to share in-
3 formation on best practices, prospective appli-
4 cants, and strategies for matching veterans with
5 appropriate employment;

6 (C) develop mandatory annual training for
7 human resources employees and hiring man-
8 agers of covered agencies concerning veterans'
9 employment, including training on veterans'
10 preferences and special authorities for the hir-
11 ing of veterans;

12 (D) develop a skills-based, cross-govern-
13 mental career development program for covered
14 agencies to leverage in matching veterans' ca-
15 reer aspirations with high-growth occupations;

16 (E) promote the Federal Government as
17 an employer of choice to transitioning members
18 of the Armed Forces and veterans;

19 (F) market the talent, experience, and
20 dedication of transitioning members of the
21 Armed Forces and veterans to Federal agen-
22 cies; and

23 (G) disseminate Federal employment infor-
24 mation to veterans and hiring officials.

1 (3) ACCOUNTABILITY.—Not later than 1 year
2 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director
3 of the Office of Personnel Management shall submit
4 to Congress a report on—

5 (A) progress made toward the sharing of
6 resources among veterans employment officials;

7 (B) progress made toward the sharing of
8 information among veterans employment offi-
9 cials, including steps to promote face-to-face
10 interaction and the use of Federal information
11 gateways;

12 (C) the development and implementation of
13 training programs for human resources employ-
14 ees and hiring managers of Federal agencies;

15 (D) career development programs for vet-
16 erans seeking employment; and

17 (E) efforts to promote the Federal Govern-
18 ment as an employer of choice to transitioning
19 members of the Armed Forces and veterans.

20 **SEC. 3. INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON VETERANS EMPLOY-**
21 **MENT.**

22 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—There is established an
24 interagency council on matters relating to the em-
25 ployment of veterans.

1 (2) DESIGNATION.—The council established
2 under paragraph (1) shall be known as the “Inter-
3 agency Council on Veterans Employment” (in this
4 section the “Council”).

5 (b) MEMBERSHIP.—

6 (1) COMPOSITION.—The Council shall consist of
7 the heads of—

8 (A) each covered agency (as defined in sec-
9 tion 2(a)); and

10 (B) any other Executive agency (as defined
11 in section 105 of title 5, United States Code)
12 that the President may designate.

13 (2) CO-CHAIRS.—The Secretary of Labor and
14 the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall serve as Co-
15 Chairs of the Council.

16 (3) VICE-CHAIR.—The Director of the Office of
17 Personnel Management shall serve as the Vice Chair
18 of the Council.

19 (c) DUTIES.—The duties of the Council shall include
20 each of the following:

21 (1) To advise and assist the President and the
22 Director of the Office of Personnel Management on
23 matters relating to maintaining a coordinated Gov-
24 ernment-wide effort to increase the number of vet-
25 erans employed by the Federal Government in posi-

tions that match the skills and career aspirations of veterans, by enhancing recruiting, hiring, retention, training and skills development, and job satisfaction.

(2) To serve as a national forum for promoting employment opportunities for veterans in the executive branch of the Federal Government.

(3) To establish performance measures to assess the effectiveness of efforts to promote recruiting, hiring, retention, training and skills development, and job satisfaction of veterans by the Federal Government.

(4) Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act and not less frequently than once each year thereafter, to submit to the President and Congress a report on the effectiveness of those efforts.

(d) ADMINISTRATION.—

(1) DUTIES OF CO-CHAIRS.—The Co-Chairs shall convene regular meetings of the Council, determine its agenda, and direct its work.

(2) STEERING COMMITTEE.—At the direction of the Co-Chairs, the Council may establish—

(A) a Steering Committee to provide leadership, accountability, and strategic direction to the Council; and

1 (B) subgroups to promote coordination
2 among veterans employment officials (as de-
3 fined in section 2(a)).

4 (3) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.—The Vice Chair
5 shall designate an Executive Director for the Council
6 to support the Vice Chair in managing the Council’s
7 activities.

8 (4) OPM.—The Office of Personnel Manage-
9 ment shall provide administrative support for the
10 Council to the extent permitted by law and within
11 existing appropriations (as of the date of the provi-
12 sion).

13 **SEC. 4. EXPANSION OF SKILLBRIDGE INITIATIVE TO IN-**
14 **CLUDE PARTICIPATION BY FEDERAL AGEN-**
15 **CIES.**

16 (a) MODIFICATION OF INITIATIVE BY SECRETARY OF
17 DEFENSE.—The Secretary of Defense, in consultation
18 with the Director of the Office of Personnel Management,
19 shall make such modifications to the SkillBridge initiative
20 of the Department of Defense as the Secretary considers
21 appropriate to enable Federal agencies to participate in
22 the initiative as employers and trainers, including the pro-
23 vision of training by Federal agencies under the initiative
24 to transitioning members of the Armed Forces.

1 (b) PARTICIPATION BY FEDERAL AGENCIES.—The
2 Director, in consultation with the Secretary, shall take
3 such actions as may be necessary to ensure that each Fed-
4 eral agency participates in the SkillBridge initiative of the
5 Department of Defense as described in subsection (a).

6 (c) TRANSITIONING MEMBERS OF THE ARMED
7 FORCES DEFINED.—In this section, the term
8 “transitioning member of the Armed Forces” means a
9 member of the Armed Forces who is expected to be dis-
10 charged or released from active duty in the Armed Forces
11 not more than 180 days after the member commences
12 training under the SkillBridge initiative.

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