



**“Hire a Veteran” - President Obama
signs the Veterans Opportunity to Work
to Hire Heroes Act of 2011**

Federal contractors who had undergone recent audits can attest to the fact that the OFCCP is stepping up their expectations and efforts with regards to outreach programs geared towards recruitment (and hiring) of more veterans. The OFCCP has gone beyond just asking for proof of job postings, but has also asked for proof of the contractor's active relationship with their local veteran's office and their utilization of the Department of Labor's veteran outreach tools (e.g., asking for the local veteran's office's contact information, when was the local office last contacted, etc.). This is also coupled with the expected Spring 2012 release of the revised regulations regarding the implementation of section 4212 of the VEVRAA (Vietnam Era Veterans' readjustment Assistance Act of 1974).

The current administration's focus on assisting veterans to be part of the productive workforce has become apparent when President Barack Obama signed the "VOW [Veterans Opportunity to Work] to Hire Heroes Act" into law on Monday, November 21, 2011. This is another stepping stone for the Obama Administration in their high pursuit of making sure that our service members will have jobs available when they come home.

The "VOW to Hire Heroes Act" is aimed to lower the high rate of unemployment among our veterans that currently stands at an 11.5%ⁱ and get our unemployed veterans back to work. The bill combines the provisions of House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman, Jeff Miller, R-Florida, Senator Patty Murray, D-Washington and portions of President's Obama's American Jobs Act into this new law. According to The Democratic Policy and Communications Centerⁱⁱ, the provisions of the law are:

- Tax credit of up to \$5,600 for hiring veterans who have been looking for a job for more than six months, as well as a \$2,400 credit for veterans who are unemployed for more than 4 weeks, but less than 6 months.
- Tax credit of up to \$9,600 for hiring veterans with service-connected disabilities who have been looking for a job for more than six months.
- The VOW to Hire Heroes Act makes the Transition Assistance Program (TAP), an interagency workshop coordinated by Departments of Defense, Labor and Veterans Affairs, mandatory for service members moving on to civilian life to help them secure 21st century jobs through résumé writing workshops and career counseling.
- Expands education and training opportunities for older veterans by providing 100,000 unemployed veterans of past eras and wars with up to 1-year of additional Montgomery GI benefits to go towards education or training programs at community colleges or technical schools.
- Provides disabled veterans up to one (1) year of additional Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Benefits.
- Allows service members to begin the federal employment process prior to separation in order to facilitate a truly seamless transition from the military to jobs at VA, Homeland Security, or the many other federal agencies in need of our veterans.

With the passage of the "VOW to Hire Heroes Act," the Obama Administration has proven, once more, that they are making sure our service men and women have access to good jobs. In assurance that our veterans are accessible to jobs, the Secretary of the Department of Labor Hilda Solis' vision of "good jobs for everyone" trickles down to one of its offices, the Office of Federal Contract Compliance (OFCCP).

ⁱ United States Department of Labor, *The Veteran Labor Force in the Recover*.
<http://www.dol.gov/sec/media/reports/veteranslaborforce/>

ⁱⁱ Democratic Policy and Communications Center. *FACT SHETT: The VOW to Hire Heroes Act*.
<http://dpc.senate.gov/docs/fs-112-1-28.pdf>

