

TO REQUIRE THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO INCLUDE ON THE MAIN PAGE OF THE INTERNET WEBSITE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS A HYPERLINK TO THE VETSUCCESS INTERNET WEBSITE AND TO PUBLICIZE SUCH INTERNET WEBSITE

SEPTEMBER 28, 2010.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. FILNER, from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 3685]

The Committee on Veterans' Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 3685) to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to include on the main page of the Internet website of the Department of Veterans Affairs a hyperlink to the VetSuccess Internet website and to publicize such Internet website, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

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PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

H.R. 3685 was introduced on September 30, 2009 by Representative Cliff Stearns of Florida. H.R. 3685 would require the Depart-

ment of Veterans Affairs (VA) to include on the main page of the Department's Internet site, a link to the VetSuccess Web site. The bill would also require VA to publicize the existence of the link and to conduct outreach to veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), there were 1,039,000 unemployed veterans in August of 2010. Among those veterans, there were 44,000 unemployed veterans ages 18 to 24, for a rate of 19.3 percent. Among older veterans aged 25 to 64, while the rates of unemployment were lower, there were over 850,000 veterans searching for jobs with rates as high as 11.5 percent among the designated age cohorts.

The Committee notes that while the latest unemployment rates among the overall veteran population are slightly lower than the national unemployment rate, unemployment among veterans, especially disabled veterans should be a primary focus of efforts to reduce unemployment.

During the June 6, 2010, legislative hearing on H.R. 3685 held by the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, Representative Stearns described concerns expressed by his constituents about the difficulty in determining local employment opportunities. He noted this was especially important as disabled veterans were faced with choosing an education and training in the VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VRE) program. He also noted that it is important to use taxpayer resources to train veterans for jobs that exist in the area where they live or intend to live and that the VA Web site did not facilitate such job searches.

H.R. 3685 would provide more visible information on the Internet regarding employment opportunities for veterans. In addition to being able to view jobs for veterans posted by several sources, VA's Web site needs remodeling to provide a comprehensive list of links to multiple resources designed to assist veterans in obtaining a job. Resources include such topics as resume building, interviewing skills, networking, and national Web sites containing job listings by very specific locations. The Committee notes that many state employment service Web sites already display employment information in highly detailed formats and encourages VA to adopt a similar approach.

By requiring VA to conduct more rigorous outreach by instituting a national media campaign, veteran job-seekers will find the expanded access to sources of employment a valuable tool to join or rejoin the ranks of the employed.

HEARINGS

On June 10, 2010, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a legislative hearing on several bills introduced during the 111th Congress, including H.R. 3685.

The following witnesses testified: The Honorable Peter DeFazio of Oregon; The Honorable Cliff Stearns of Florida; The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry of Nebraska; Mr. Richard Daley, Associate Legislation Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Ms. Catherine A. Trombley, Assistant Director, National Economic Commission, The American Legion; Mr. Eric A. Hilleman, Director, National Legisla-

tive Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Thomas Zampieri, Ph.D, Director of Government Relations, Blinded Veterans Association; Michael R. Duenas, O.D., Associate Director, Health Sciences and Policy, American Optometric Association; and, Mr. Thomas J. Pamperin, Associate Deputy Under Secretary for Policy and Program Management, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs accompanied by Mr. John Brizzi, Deputy Assistant General Counsel, Office of General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Mr. Joseph E. Simpson, Attorney, Office of General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Those submitting statements for the record included: The Honorable Frank J. Kratovil, Jr., Representative of Maryland and Mr. Raymond C. Kelly, National Legislative Director, American Veterans (AMVETS).

SUBCOMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

On July 15, 2010, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in an open markup session and ordered favorably forwarded to the full Committee H.R. 3685 by voice vote.

COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

On September 15, 2010, the full Committee met in an open markup session, a quorum being present, and ordered H.R. 3685 reported favorably to the House of Representatives by a voice vote.

COMMITTEE VOTES

Clause 3(b) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives requires the Committee to list the record votes on the motion to report the legislation and amendments thereto. There were no record votes taken on amendments or in connection with ordering H.R. 3685 reported to the House. A motion by Mr. Buyer of Indiana to order H.R. 3685 reported favorably to the House of Representatives was agreed to by voice vote.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS

In compliance with clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII and clause (2)(b)(1) of rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee's oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in the descriptive portions of this report.

STATEMENT OF GENERAL PERFORMANCE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In accordance with clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee's performance goals and objectives are reflected in the descriptive portions of this report.

NEW BUDGET AUTHORITY, ENTITLEMENT AUTHORITY, AND TAX EXPENDITURES

In compliance with clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee will adopt as its own the estimate of new budget authority, entitlement authority, or tax expenditures or revenues contained in the cost estimate prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

EARMARKS AND TAX AND TARIFF BENEFITS

H.R. 3685 does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

COMMITTEE COST ESTIMATE

The Committee will adopt as its own the cost estimate on H.R. 3685 prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, a cost estimate for H.R. 3685 provided by the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 was not available when the Committee filed this report.

FEDERAL MANDATES STATEMENT

The Committee will adopt as its own the estimate of Federal mandates regarding H.R. 3685 prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 423 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE STATEMENT

No advisory committees within the meaning of section 5(b) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act would be created by H.R. 3685.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 3(d)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee finds that the Constitutional authority for H.R. 3685 is provided by Article I, section 8 of the Constitution of the United States.

APPLICABILITY TO LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Committee finds that the legislation does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the Congressional Accountability Act.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS OF THE LEGISLATION

Section 1. Promotion of the VetSuccess internet Web site

This section would require VA to include a link to the VetSuccess webpage on the main VA webpage. This section would require, subject to appropriations, VA to use national media to promote the VetSuccess Web site and to conduct outreach to veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars to make them aware of the VetSuccess Web site. Finally, this section would define the term VetSuccess internet Web site as the domain name www.vetsuccess.gov or any successor Internet Web site maintained by VA.