

*Urge Swift Passage of Their Bipartisan, Bicameral 'Veterans Skills to Jobs Act'*

**Washington, D.C.** — U.S. Representatives Tim Walz (D-MN) and Jeff Denham (R-CA) and U.S. Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL) today praised President Barack Obama for voicing support for action to improve the federal certification process by making it easier for veterans to use skills acquired in the military to find jobs back home. Reps. Walz and Denham have introduced bipartisan legislation in the House, and Sen. Nelson in the Senate, that would enact some of the reforms called for by the President.

In March 2012, Reps. Walz and Denham introduced H.R. 4155, *the Veteran Skills to Jobs Act*, to address the unacceptably high rate of veteran unemployment by streamlining the federal certification process and cutting through the bureaucratic red tape, making it easier for veterans to utilize the skills they acquired in the military to find work at home. Rather than going through the process of redundant trainings for jobs they are already qualified for, veterans with the relevant training would be eligible to receive a federal license and get back to work immediately.

**“Our goal as a nation is to provide those who serve with the opportunity to achieve the American Dream. We must do all we can to ensure our veterans are finding careers that give them the opportunity to utilize their skills, support their families, and have passion for their work,”** said Walz. **“By streamlining the Federal certification process, the Veteran Skills to Jobs Act will cut through the red tape and make it easier for our veterans to find employment. There is no reason why a veteran who is certified to work on airplanes in Afghanistan should have to take redundant trainings to work on the same planes right here at home. I applaud the President for his work standing up for veterans and working to ensure the skills they acquired in the military can be used to find jobs to support their families at home.”**

**“I am pleased to see the President has joined me in tackling the issue of licensing and credentialing reform to put our veterans to work here at home,”** said Denham. **“Helping our returning veterans find jobs is not the concern of one party or one body of Congress, and having the Administration’s support for these efforts moves us one step closer to enacting this bill into law.”**

Key initiatives of Walz and Denham's legislation, *the Veterans Skills to Jobs Act*, were highlighted by the President during a speech given earlier today as one way to address veteran unemployment. The bill directs the head of each federal department and agency to treat relevant military training as sufficient to satisfy training or certification requirements for federal license, and get veterans back to work. Licensure and certification are the two primary types of credentialing. Federally issued occupational licenses cover many areas including the aerospace, communications and maritime sector.

**"I personally have dealt with this problem as a crew chief in the Air Force,"** Denham continued. **"Despite being trained to maintain some of the most complex aircraft in the world, when I left the military I was told I needed to go to school for three years in order to perform that same job in the private sector. It's unacceptable that the federal government has still not reformed its licensing process, especially at a time when so many veterans are out of work. The Veteran Skills to Jobs Act would fix this problem, and I'm glad to see that the President agrees."**

Companion legislation to Walz and Denham's *Vets Skills to Jobs Act* has been introduced in the Senate by U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson (D-FL) and cosponsored by U.S. Sens. Olympia Snowe (R-ME), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT).

**"When you come back from war, you shouldn't have to do battle with bureaucrats,"** Nelson said.

**"This will remove some of the obstacles in our veterans' way and should make it easier for them to get occupational and professional licenses when they get home."**

**"Matching qualified veterans with federal licenses which require their expertise is good for veterans, good for the economy and good for the country,"** said Fang Wong, National Commander of the American Legion.

**"The American Legion fully supports enacting the 'Veteran Skills to Jobs Act,' and applauds the bipartisan leadership of Congressman Denham and Congressman Walz in addressing this critical issue facing our nation's veterans and their families."**

In addition to the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Navy League, the Association of the United States Army, the Association of the United States Navy, the Air Force Association, the National Guard Association of the United States and the Retired Enlisted

Association.

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