

Washington, D.C. – Today, legislation introduced by U.S. Representatives Tim Walz (D-MN) and Jeff Denham (R-CA) to make it easier for veterans to find jobs using skills acquired through military training passed the U.S. House of Representatives with unanimous bipartisan support.

Walz and Denham introduced H.R. 4155, the *Veteran Skills to Jobs Act*, in the House earlier this year 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. Companion legislation was subsequently introduced by Sen. Bill Nelson (D-FL) in the Senate as S. 2239, the *Veterans Skills to Jobs Act of 2012*.

“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. Today’s vote inches us closer towards making this common-sense, job creating legislation the law of the land.”**

“America is blessed with the strongest, most capable and professional military in the world. With 200,000 servicemen and women transitioning to the civilian workforce each year, we must ensure that they are able to find jobs,” said Denham. “This legislation will remove some of the obstacles in our veterans’ way by reforming the licensing and credentialing process to put our veterans to work here at home. Helping our returning veterans find jobs is not the concern of one party or one body of Congress, and today’s vote is a crucial step forward in getting this bill signed into law.”

Rather than going through the process of redundant trainings for jobs they are already qualified for, Walz’s legislation 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. Veterans with the relevant training would be eligible to receive a federal license and get back to work immediately.

"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 the strong bipartisan support from both Chambers of Congress toward implementing this important goal."

Reps. Walz and Denham have received widespread support and praise for their sponsorship of the *Veteran Skills to Jobs Act*, from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the American Legion, and several other Veteran Service Organizations.

"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."

###