

**TESTIMONY OF**  
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**OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT**  
**VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING**  
**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR**

**BEFORE THE**  
**SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY**  
**COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
**U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**July 27, 2005**

Chairman Boozman, Ranking Member Herseth, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee.

It is my honor to appear before this committee today on behalf of Secretary Elaine Chao to present the views of the Department of Labor (DOL) regarding several bills and draft bills.

**A draft bill to increase the amount of assistance for certain disabled veterans for specially adapted housing.**

DOL generally supports appropriate legislation that benefits veterans, but DOL respectfully defers to the Department of Veterans Affairs on the draft bill to increase assistance for certain disabled veterans for specially adapted housing.

**A draft bill to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide adaptive housing assistance to disabled veterans residing temporarily in housing owned by a parent or sibling.**

DOL generally supports appropriate legislation that benefits veterans, but DOL respectfully defers to the Department of Veterans Affairs on the draft bill to provide adaptive housing assistance to disabled veterans residing temporarily in housing owned by a parent or sibling.

**A draft bill to authorize the Secretary of Labor to establish professional qualifications for disabled veterans outreach program specialists and local veterans' employment representatives.**

This draft bill requires the Secretary of Labor to establish professional qualifications for the employment and continued employment of persons as Disabled Veterans Outreach Program specialists (DVOPs) and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs). The Secretary would be required to establish those standards within 180 days of enactment of the Act. Persons employed as DVOPs and LVERs at the time of enactment would be allowed a five year period to meet the continued employment qualifications.

The Jobs for Veterans Act (Public Law 107-288) requires that states employ, to the maximum extent possible, qualified disabled veterans to serve as DVOPs, and qualified veterans or other eligible persons to serve as LVERs, but do not set specific standards for establishing the qualifications of candidates for these positions.

We agree that establishing qualification standards for the DVOPs and LVERs could enhance services to veterans and improve their employment outcomes. However, in order to better understand the nature and extent of these professional standards, including how we would go about implementing them, we believe a thorough review of this issue is required. Therefore, our approach, consistent with the Human Capital reforms in the President's Management Agenda, would be first to initiate a workforce analysis to identify the specific competencies needed by DVOPs and LVERs, any existing skill gaps, and options for closing these gaps.

DVOPs and LVERs are state merit employees whose employment standards are currently established by state workforce agencies. The establishment of national employment standards in the DVOP and LVER programs could provide a common level of standardization among the states by establishing, for the first time, competency models to guide their workforce activities. We would want to involve our stakeholders at the national and state levels on the front end of this initiative to ensure a workable program.

**H.R. 1773, a bill to make permanent the Native American Veteran Housing Loan Program, and for other purposes.**

DOL generally supports appropriate legislation that benefits veterans, but DOL respectfully defers to the Department of Veterans Affairs on H.R. 1773, a bill to make permanent the Native American Veteran Housing Loan Program, and for other purposes.

**H.R. 3082, a bill to require that 9 percent of procurement contracts entered into by the Department of Veterans Affairs be awarded to small business concerns owned by veterans, and for other purposes.**

DOL generally supports appropriate legislation that benefits veterans, but DOL respectfully defers to the Department of Veterans Affairs on H.R. 3082, a bill to require

that 9 percent of procurement contracts entered into by the Department of Veterans Affairs be awarded to small business concerns owned by veterans, and for other purposes.

**A draft bill to establish on the Department of Veterans Affairs an Office of National Disabled Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events.**

DOL generally supports appropriate legislation that benefits veterans, but DOL respectfully defers to the Department of Veterans Affairs on the draft bill to establish on the Department of Veterans Affairs an Office of National Disabled Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my testimony. I am pleased to respond to any questions.