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COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

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Committee Hosts Summit to Discuss Veteran Employment

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs hosted a Veterans Employment Summit to discuss the best practices of the private sector for hiring veterans. More than 25 companies with veteran hiring programs attended the Summit to bring attention to the issue, as well as to share commonalities in veteran hiring practices and discuss new ideas to help veterans find employment in today's job market.

"I am grateful to all the companies who attended the Veterans Employment Summit today to share with Members of the Committee, and the public, what they have found to be the most effective and efficient ways to help America's veterans find meaningful employment in today's tough economy," stated Rep. Jeff Miller, Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

"When the brave men and women who serve our nation in uniform leave to deploy overseas, they don't just leave behind their family and friends, often times they leave behind jobs and livelihoods as well," said Rep. Tim Walz, a member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. "I want to work with veterans and employers alike to make sure our warriors have access to a good paying job to support their families when they return."

All the companies in attendance were unanimous in expressing their desire to do more to help lower veteran unemployment rates, which currently stands at 7.7% for all generations of veterans, with higher percentages for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans.

"Prudential is honored to have been a part of the Committee's Veteran Employment Summit. We share the important goal of addressing the full continuum of employment for veterans, not just recruiting and hiring, but also retaining this valuable segment of the workforce," said Mr. Ray Weeks, Vice President of Veterans Initiatives for Prudential Financial. "We applaud the Committee for hosting today's Summit and look forward to continuing to share best practices across our corporate peers, industry partners, and government officials."

Speaking on behalf of American Corporate Partners, Mr. Sid Goodfriend, Founder and Chairman, said, "This effort really shows the spirit of the American people to help those who serve. We built a program to connect large employers with returning veterans. Our program is a career program and that is where we need to start." American Corporate Partners provides mentorships to veterans through partner corporations including IBM, URS, Verizon, Pepsico, Campbell's, and GE.

"Veterans have built the railroad, staffed the railroad, and maintained the railroad for our complete 180 year history," stated Mr. Garrick Francis, Director of Federal Affairs for CSX. "We value the safety, discipline, and mindset we get from hiring veterans."

Several of the companies, including GE, noted that veterans feel most comfortable when they are hired by a fellow veteran. Companies also said that CEOs must take a leadership role in hiring veterans into their organizations.

“Veterans are highly skilled, highly trainable, and highly recruited as a workforce. It’s smart business,” stated Mr. Chris Hale, Chairman of Victory Media, which publishes *GI Jobs* magazine.

One frustration for employers, which was a common theme throughout the Summit, is the inability to provide internships to transitioning servicemembers and give them real-world experience, a practice currently not allowed by the Department of Defense.

“The effort to hire veterans must start at the grassroots level, in communities around the country,” said Mr. Bill Kamela, Senior Policy Counsel at Microsoft, which launched Elevate America’s Veterans Initiative. “The ability for larger corporations to reach into those communities is awesome, with technology adding new ways every day. This not only helps stimulate the local economy, but more important, helps our veterans access the training and jobs they need.”

“It is clear from today’s Summit that the government can best help America’s businesses by creating an environment which allows them to do their work. We can also help by providing our veterans with the tools to help them find employment and allow America’s businesses, especially our small businesses, to capitalize on those tools to give our veterans the homecoming they deserve – a job,” Miller said.

Companies who participated in the Summit included American Corporate Partners, American Electric Power, Booz Allen Hamilton, Inc., U.S. Chamber of Commerce, CINTAS Corporation, Computer Sciences Corporation, CSX Corporation, Cubic Applications, Inc., Deloitte, Direct Employers Association, Edison Electric Institute, General Electric Company, *GI Jobs* Magazine, Inova Health System, ITT Systems Corporation, Intelligent Compensation, LLC, JP Morgan Chase, McKesson, ManTech International, Microsoft, Northrop Grumman, Prudential Financial, Society of Human Resource Management, Sodexo, Southern Company, URS Corporation, the U.S. Veterans Employment and Training Service, and Walmart.

To view a copy of the Pledge to lower veteran unemployment to less than 5% by the end of 2012 signed by participants and photos from the Summit, please click [here](#). A summary of the Summit and an overview of the programs available to veterans is available at Veterans.House.Gov/Summit.

Retweatables:

#HVAC and corporations agree – we must get America’s #vets back to work.

Lower the #vet unemployment rate to 5% by 2012. Learn more at: Veterans.House.Gov/Jobs.

America’s #vets are great hires. They have the discipline, integrity, & adaptability for today’s workforce. Spread the message @HouseVetAffairs.

For more news from the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, please visit:
Veterans.House.Gov

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