

Standing up for our veterans

By Rep. Jeff Denham (R-Calif.) and Rep. Tim Walz (D-Minn.) - 03/28/12 12:41 PM ET

America is blessed with the strongest and most capable military in the world. Our service members execute challenging missions in the most complex environment on earth. They leave the military with skills that our economy needs to compete. It is our responsibility to take care of them when they return. Unfortunately, upon returning home, many of our veterans discover that even though they have the training to perform a wide variety of jobs, the system often times fail to recognize that training. This can delay a veteran's transition into civilian life by requiring them to obtain redundant certifications which cost time and money and can prevent them from acquiring the good paying jobs they deserve.

Many states, including Washington, Virginia, and Utah have passed legislation to take their military training into account. We're simply calling on the federal government to do the same. The Veterans Skills to Jobs Act would cut through the red tape and make government more efficient by allowing relevant military training to satisfy certification requirements for Federal licenses. 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.

It is important to note that this bill does not create new agencies and will not raise the deficit. The Veterans Skills to Jobs Act will benefit our economy and ensure that the talents of our brave servicemen and women are put to work immediately. Especially now, as the job market slowly recovers from the depths of the recession, we need to make certain that veterans are positioned to take full advantage of any and all opportunities before them.

At a time when the problems facing our country have grown so great, we cannot let politics stand in the way of progress. We came to Congress to solve problems. This Congress has a special responsibility to the over 1.8 million servicemen and women who have been deployed since 9/11, among which the unemployment rate is 12.1%. Making it easier for our veterans to find work is something we can all agree on. The Veterans Skills to Jobs Act is endorsed by the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), and bipartisan, companion legislation has also been introduced in the Senate.

As veterans ourselves you can count on us to never forget the solemn obligation that we have to those who keep us safe. We understand the burden of long deployments which fall not just upon the soldier, sailor, marine or airman, but on the families who support them as well. Our troops have already sacrificed so much. Ensuring they have a hassle-free transition back to civilian life and are able to seek out and find prosperity wherever possible should be paramount in our work. The Veterans Skills to Jobs Act is simply a commonsense and overdue part of this effort.