

Senate passes HIRE Vets Act

The Senate recently passed HR 244, Honoring Investments in Recruiting and Employing American Military Veterans Act of 2017, which had already passed through the House of Representatives in early 2017.

The legislation, known as the HIRE Vets Act, is designed to promote the recruitment, hiring and retaining of veterans in the corporate sector.

Representative Paul Cook sponsored the bill and said in a press release, "The HIRE Vets Act is an opportunity for Americans to see which companies truly live up to the employment promises they make to veterans. Veterans who serve this country honorably shouldn't struggle to find employment and this bill creates an innovative system to encourage and recognize employers who make veterans a priority in their hiring practices."

According to Congress.gov, HR 244 tasks the Department of Labor to establish a Hire Vets Medallion Program, which creates a Gold HIRE Vets Medallion Award and a Platinum HIRE Vets Medallion Award for employers.

The award of a medallion by the Department of Labor to employers is based on the overall percentage of total company employees who are veterans, the percentage of employees who are retained, whether the company establishes veterans' assistance and training programs, if the organization employs human resource specialists for veterans and what levels of support the employer provides for income and tuition for veterans.

But, the bill does not address recruitment, hiring or retention of disabled veterans.

"This bill is a step in the right direction, but it's my hope

more will be done to ensure disabled veterans in particular are not forgotten,” said National Employment Director Jeff Hall. “The 2015 census tells us there are about 4 million veterans with a service-connected disability rating in this country. That’s a huge pool of talent for employers to tap into.”

A study conducted by i4cp, a marketing and research firm, collected data from over 200 organizations and found at least 75 percent of employers surveyed who hired people with disabilities reported disabled employees exceeded their expectations, while 79 percent said they hired disabled workers because they’re dependable and 74 percent reported high productivity among disabled employees.

Anthony Kennedy Shriver who authored the foreword of the study said the research found that disabled employees were “enormously talented, loyal, hard-working and driven.”

There’s a lot of corroborating evidence out there that illustrates how hiring disabled employees is good for business,” said Hall. “Employers and lawmakers should keep in mind this group of people who have very positive attributes to bring to the workforce when considering the issue of veteran employment.”