



The Manufacturing Jobs for Veterans Act

Too many veterans are still struggling to find work. Congresswoman DelBene believes our nation must be doing more to meet its commitment to these brave individuals. She is dedicated to expanding access to educational opportunities, on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and professional certification programs for veterans and servicemembers who are re-entering the civilian workforce.

VETERAN UNEMPLOYMENT

Across all age groups, more than 380,000 unemployed veterans were struggling to find work in 2021, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). That included 118,000 veterans who have served in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other countries since 9/11. The [discrepancy of unemployment](#) between states is particularly troubling. While veteran unemployment rates can be as low as 1.6 percent in some states, it can be as high as 7.6 percent in others. Veterans, particularly those without a college degree and skills training, are [more likely](#) to find jobs in states with low skilled manufacturing industries. Yet, it is more challenging for veterans to fill [vacancies](#) in states with industries that predominantly demand highly skilled and educated workers.

Early in the pandemic, veterans faced unemployment rates as high as [12.1%](#). While veteran unemployment has dropped meaningfully in recent years, research has shown that [61%](#) of veterans are underemployed, meaning they are overqualified in their jobs given their military-learned skills and military service experiences. The COVID-19 pandemic only further [exacerbated](#) veterans' underemployment. Many veterans have no choice but to take on lower-paying jobs to support themselves and their family during these trying and uncertain times. As long as a single veteran is still struggling to find jobs they deserve, Congress still has work to do. Particularly as workers face significant challenges adapting to a rapidly changing economy as we adapt to our new normal following the COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential that we strive to improve 21st century employment opportunities for those transitioning back into civilian life.

Job openings in the United States are at a record high, with at least [790,000 job openings](#) being posted each month in America's manufacturing industry. Unfortunately, hundreds of thousands are going unfilled, and U.S. manufacturers are predicting to reach [2 million unfilled positions](#) in the next decade — largely due to the well-documented skills gap in advanced manufacturing. Thankfully, veterans represent a vital pipeline of skilled, capable workers, many of whom have talents and training that can be effectively translated to such manufacturing jobs as welding, machining, and fabricating.

THE MANUFACTURING JOBS FOR VETERANS ACT

The *Manufacturing Jobs for Veterans Act* would accelerate skills training for U.S. veterans in manufacturing career pathways, ensure veterans have the tools needed to translate their military skills to the civilian workforce, and encourage manufacturers to recruit, hire, and train our nation's returning heroes. The bill would direct the Department of Labor (DOL) to award \$50 million in grants over the next 5 years to establish pilot State Manufacturing Employment Programs to support on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and certification classes for eligible veterans through employers and labor-management organizations. In doing so, it would demonstrate a strong commitment to closing the manufacturing skills gap and putting our nation's veterans back to work.

Veterans and transitioning servicemembers offer a valuable set of skills and training to American employers. This important legislation will honor veterans' service to the nation by ensuring they have the resources to use those talents to find long-term, good-paying jobs in the manufacturing sector.

Staff Contact: Shanta Katipamula, shanta.katipamula@mail.house.gov