



MANUFACTURING JOBS FOR VETERANS ACT

Congresswoman Suzan K. DelBene

Congresswoman DelBene strongly believes that as a nation, we have an obligation to care for those who risk their lives and make painful sacrifices for our families and freedoms. Unfortunately, too many veterans are struggling to find jobs, and Congress isn't doing enough to meet its commitment to these brave men and women. Rep. DelBene is dedicated to expanding access to educational opportunities, on-the-job training, and professional certification programs for veterans and servicemembers who are re-entering the civilian workforce.

High Veteran Unemployment

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the unemployment rate in 2013 for Post-9/11 veterans was 9.0 percent – a staggering and inexcusable number, compared to the national unemployment rate of 7.4 percent. Across all age groups, there were more than 720,000 unemployed veterans struggling to find work last year.

It's critical that we take action to meet the needs of our veterans. Particularly as our fragile economy continues to recover from the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, it is essential that we strive to improve employment opportunities for those transitioning back into civilian life.

The Manufacturing Jobs for Veterans Act

As many as 600,000 jobs remain unfilled in America's manufacturing industry, while over 80 percent of manufacturers have reported difficulties in finding workers to fill their open positions—largely due to the well-documented skills gap in advanced manufacturing. However, 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* 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.

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