



Strengthen Employment Protections for Veterans with Disabilities

(Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act & Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act)

WHAT IS VEVRAA & SECTION 503?

In an effort to address the employment challenges facing both veterans and individuals with disabilities, Congress approved the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974 (VEVRAA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 503) to prohibit employers that do business with the federal government from discriminating in employment against protected veterans (VEVRAA) and individuals (including veterans) with disabilities (Section 503). In addition, these historic and bipartisan laws require federal contractors that meet certain contract size thresholds to take affirmative action to recruit, hire, promote, and retain these individuals. Four decades after their passage, the Department of Labor (DOL) in 2013 updated the regulations implementing VEVRAA and Section 503 by establishing annual hiring benchmarks (VEVRAA) and utilization goals (Section 503) for veterans and individuals with disabilities that federal contractors can use to measure their progress toward meeting the intent of the laws.

WHY DO VEVRAA & SECTION 503 EMPLOYMENT PROTECTIONS MATTER FOR VETERANS WITH DISABILITIES?

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Veterans Task Force advocates for legislation and policies affecting veterans with disabilities. The CCD Veterans Task Force strongly supported the recent federal regulations implementing VEVRAA and Section 503. Veterans with disabilities have a higher unemployment rate and lower labor force participation rate than veterans without disabilities, according to 2015 data from DOL's Bureau of Labor Statistics. DOL estimates that more than 200,000 protected veterans and nearly 600,000 individuals with disabilities would be hired if federal contractors achieved the hiring benchmark and utilization goal set out in the VEVRAA and Section 503 final regulations. The Task Force has worked closely with DOL's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) and the contractor community to ensure these sensible provisions are understood and followed. The CCD Veterans Task Force is concerned by proposals in Congress that would weaken the employment protections for veterans and individuals with disabilities by limiting agency oversight or narrowing which contractors must comply with the law.

OUR POSITION

The CCD Veterans Task Force urges Congress to oppose efforts to weaken critical employment protections and affirmative hiring benchmarks and goals set forth in VEVRAA and Section 503 by:

- Removing language contained in the House and Senate Fiscal Year 2017 National Defense Authorization Act that weakens VEVRAA and Section 503 by preventing full implementation of Executive Order 13673.
- Requiring that providers of veteran services under proposed "Veteran Care Agreements" are subject to VEVRAA and Section 503 affirmative hiring and nondiscrimination provisions.
- Supporting full funding for OFCCP oversight and enforcement of Section 503 and VEVRAA.

CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS WITH DISABILITIES VETERANS TASK FORCE

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