

# Congress of the United States

U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Small Business  
2361 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-6315

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Members of the Committee on Small Business

**FROM:** Committee Majority Staff

**DATE:** December 5, 2025

**RE:** Full Committee Hearing Titled: “From Service to Startup: Empowering Veteran Entrepreneurs”

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On **Wednesday, December 10, 2025, at 10:00 AM ET** the Committee on Small Business will hold a hearing titled **“From Service to Startup: Empowering Veteran Entrepreneurs.”** The meeting will convene in room 2360 of the Rayburn House Office Building. The purpose of this hearing is to examine the importance of veteran entrepreneurs, address barriers to entry, and identify opportunities to strengthen support for veterans.

### I. Witnesses

- **Mr. Kevin Schmiegel**, Co-Founder and CEO, ZeroMils
- **Ms. Misty Fox**, Director, Entrepreneurship and Small Business, D’Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families
- **Mr. Christopher Lefebvre**, President and CEO, ISI Professional Services
- **Ms. Rebecca Aguilera-Gardiner**, CEO, The Veterans In Business Network

### II. Background

Every year, 200,000 active-duty members leave the military to join the community of American veterans.<sup>1</sup> While their peers were in college, getting their first jobs, and building their resumes, America’s veterans were protecting our country. Today, there are approximately 1.6 million veteran-owned firms in the United States, representing 5.3 percent of all U.S. businesses.<sup>2</sup> They have generated over \$900 billion in revenue and employ 3.2 million employees.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> JOHN D. SAWYER, GOV’T ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE, FOR VETERANS DAY—IS A KEY PROGRAM MEANT TO HELP VETERANS TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN LIFE REACHING ITS AUDIENCE? (Nov. 9, 2023).

<sup>2</sup> U.S. SMALL BUS. ADMIN. OFFICE OF ADVOCACY, VETERAN OWNERSHIP STATISTICS 2025 (Nov. 11, 2025).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

Despite the success of veteran-owned businesses, veterans face a variety of challenges in transitioning to civilian life, including access to capital and identifying transferable skills. To address that, a wide range of public and private resources has been created to help veterans pursue entrepreneurship, including dedicated outreach centers and training programs, loan assistance, and contracting opportunities.

At the federal level, the primary program that helps transition service members is the Department of Defense (DOD) Transition Assistance Program (TAP). TAP serves as a tool for service members to meet post-military goals.<sup>4</sup> As an optional course in TAP, the Small Business Administration (SBA) prepares returning service members for a life of entrepreneurship through the Boots to Business (B2B) program. Following the efforts of the Committee, B2B became a permanent program in the FY25 National Defense Authorization Act.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, through the SBA Office of Veterans Business Development, the SBA offers continued entrepreneurship training following TAP and B2B. The Office connects veterans to resources and mentors, shares contracting opportunities, and much more.<sup>6</sup>

Across the country, veteran-led initiatives are stepping in to close gaps that some federal resources cannot fill. One of the greatest strengths of the veteran community is the way veterans support one another. Long before federal programs or formal transition pathways existed, veterans relied on peer networks to share military-honed skills, offer mentorship, and create connections that made the transition into civilian life and entrepreneurship more successful. That culture of mutual support continues today, and it remains one of the most effective tools for accelerating veteran small business success—one that traditional government programs cannot replicate.

### **III. Conclusion**

Programs offered by the SBA fill an important role in empowering veteran entrepreneurs. Our service members already have the skills, knowledge, and experience to become successful employees, managers, and job creators. By connecting them with the proper resources, veterans can translate those skills into entrepreneurship and the civilian workforce. Supporting veteran entrepreneurs strengthens the local economy and is an investment in leadership, discipline, and innovation.

### **IV. Legislation Attached**

- H.R. 865 – Service-Disabled Veteran Opportunities in Small Business Act

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<sup>4</sup> *Welcome to DoD TAP*, DEP’T OF DEFENSE TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, <https://www.dodtap.mil/dodtap/app/home> (last visited Dec. 4, 2025)

<sup>5</sup> Pub. L. No. 118-159, § 873, 138 Stat. 2008 (2024)

<sup>6</sup> *Office of Veterans Business Development*, U.S. SMALL BUS. ADMIN., <https://www.sba.gov/about-sba/sba-locations/headquarters-offices/office-veterans-business-development> (last visited Dec. 2, 2025).