

**Testimony of Workcred and the American National Standards Institute before the House Committee  
on Veterans' Affairs, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity**

**Hearing on Licensing and Credentialing Standards for Servicemembers and Veterans**

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Statement of

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My name is Roy Swift and I am executive director of Workcred, an affiliate of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

ANSI is the coordinator of the U.S. standards and conformity assessment system, and Workcred is a separate 501 (c)(3) affiliate organization whose mission is to strengthen workforce quality by improving workforce credentials and the credentialing system. Before launching Workcred, I spent the previous ten years building ANSI's internationally recognized accreditation programs for personnel certificate and certification programs.

It is important to note that Workcred maintains a separation from and respects the impartiality of ANSI's accreditation services. Nevertheless, both organizations share an ongoing commitment to fostering a more robust and qualified American workforce, and enhancing the quality of credentials for both military and civilian personnel.

As a retired United States Army colonel who served a 28-year career in the U.S. Army Medical Department, I am deeply honored to testify today on the credentialing of servicemembers and veterans.

U.S. military personnel gain valuable training, skills, and at times do earn civilian credentials during their service. Credentials can contribute to personal and professional career development and enhance the potential for promotion for servicemembers on active duty. After military service, credentials can help

demonstrate to civilian employers that training and skills attained in the military are on par with those gained through traditional civilian pathways.

Unfortunately, many service members that have earned a military occupational specialty are often not licensed or certified to perform a comparable job in the civilian workforce. This situation creates an artificial barrier to employment for veterans. With an estimated 250,000 military personnel expected to leave service every year, the need to translate military skills into civilian careers is as important as ever.

But we face a tremendous challenge. There are more than 4,000 certifications in the U.S., and less than ten percent of these are accredited or reviewed by a third-party accreditation body. This lack of third-party review creates a “buyer beware” environment because most certifications would not meet a national or international standard. In fact, many self-identified “certifications” are actually educational programs with a test to measure learning outcomes and are not competency-based assessments of the individual’s ability to perform in the workplace. Certification must be fire-walled away from education to be a third-party judgment that competencies have been acquired. Certification must be time limited and have the ability to take away the certification for unethical behavior or incompetence.

Accreditation is an independent, third-party assessment of a certification body’s competency to perform the functions as I have just stated, and it plays an important role in increasing the credibility and continuous quality improvement of certifications.

ANSI’s accreditation process is designed to increase the integrity and mobility of certified professionals, and provide confidence to the marketplace that they are competent. Millions of professionals currently hold certifications from ANSI-accredited certification bodies. In ANSI’s view, the global nature of personnel certification demands accreditation to international standards. That’s why ANSI’s accreditation program is based on the American National Standard (ANS) and international standard ANSI/ISO/IEC 17024. And that’s why ANSI was the first U.S. accreditation body to deliver this accreditation in accordance with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17011, another international standard that represents the highest globally accepted practices for accreditation bodies.

This 17011 standard is also the basis for mutual recognition of accreditation bodies in countries around the world. This assures that credentials – just like products and quality management systems – are seen as equivalent and are transportable across borders, broadening the global labor market and opportunities for both employers and employees.

With respect to veterans' employability, ANSI has long been an active leader in working with the government on private-sector credentialing solutions. For example, the military's Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL) programs and the Department of Labor highlight ANSI accreditation.

With a broader vision, Workcred is focused on building a competency-driven workforce credentialing ecosystem. We want to create alignment between industry, training, and credentialing organizations. This will advance quality workforce credentials that have validity and are market valued, and will promote an open, transparent exchange of information. And an associated benefit to society should be to reduce unemployment by narrowing the "Skills Gap." ANSI and Workcred, in collaboration with the American Legion, were instrumental in working with the Army's Training and Doctrine Command to identify high quality, industry-recognized credentials relevant to Army Soldiers as candidates for Army credentialing pilot programs.

Together with partners from George Washington University and Southern Illinois University, Workcred has just launched the Credential Transparency Initiative to create greater clarity in the U.S. credentialing marketplace. Funded by Lumina Foundation, the initiative will develop common terms for describing key features of credentials. It will create a voluntary, web-based registry for sharing the resulting information. And it will test practical software applications for employers, students, educators, and other major credential stakeholders like the U.S. Department of Defense. The registry holds great promise to make civilian credentials more transparent. For example: DOD, in cooperation with partners such as the American Council on Education (ACE), could use an "app" to more efficiently connect Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) competencies to credentials in the civilian job market.

All Americans have a stake in a strong and effective labor market credentialing system – especially our nation's military servicemembers. Both ANSI and Workcred are committed to supporting the employability and successful transition of military servicemembers into the workforce. We look forward to continuing to partner with the military, government agencies, and groups like the American Legion to advance this effort.

Thank you and I look forward to your questions.

**About Workcred**

Formed in 2014 as an affiliate of the American National Standards Institute, Workcred is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to strengthen workforce quality by improving the credentialing system, ensuring its ongoing relevance, and preparing employers, workers, educators, and governments to use it effectively.

[www.workcred.org](http://www.workcred.org)

**About ANSI**

ANSI is a private, non-profit organization that administers and coordinates the U.S. voluntary standards and conformity assessment system. In this role, the Institute oversees the development and use of voluntary consensus standards by accrediting the procedures used by standards developing organizations, and approving their finished documents as American National Standards.

Internationally, the Institute is the official U.S. representative to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and, via the U.S. National Committee, the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC). ANSI's membership is comprised of businesses, government agencies, professional societies and trade associations, standards developing organizations (SDOs), and consumer and labor organizations.

The Institute represents the diverse interests of more than 125,000 companies and organizations and 3.5 million professionals worldwide. ANSI works closely with stakeholders from both industry and government to identify consensus-based solutions to national and global priorities – an inclusive, collaborative partnership between the public and private sectors.

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## **Statement on Federal Grants and Contracts**

Dr. Roy Swift is presenting this testimony on behalf of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the ANSI affiliate organization, Workcred.

While ANSI has not directly received any Federal grants and contracts within the previous two fiscal years that are relevant to the subject matter of this testimony, we have partnered on some projects that are supported by grant money, and we have relationships with agencies that we wish to disclose as relevant. These include:

- The Department of Energy (DOE) working with the National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS) and industry stakeholders developed the Better Buildings Workforce Guidelines, voluntary national guidelines to improve the quality and consistency of commercial building workforce credentials for four key energy-related jobs: Building Energy Auditor, Building Commissioning Professional, Building Operations Professional, Energy Manager. ANSI is designated as an accreditation body for these schemes by DOE. ANSI is a subcontractor to NIBS for this initiative, which did receive funding from DOE; however, this funding was not provided directly to ANSI by DOE. The certifications are part of a coordinated effort under DOE's Guidelines for Home Energy Professionals project, which also developed Standard Work Specifications (SWS) for Home Energy Upgrades, available at [sws.nrel.gov](http://sws.nrel.gov).
- ANSI and the Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC) developed a joint accreditation program for energy efficiency or renewable energy related certificate programs. This initiative was funded by DOE grant money; however, this funding was not provided directly to ANSI by DOE.
- ANSI's Certificate Accreditation Program (CAP) has accredited three federal agencies: the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the FBI Academy, and the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center. These agencies paid accreditation fees but did not enter into grants or contracts with ANSI.

Workcred does not have any Federal grants or contracts to disclose.