



Charter Communications Testimony
House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity
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Paul Marchand, Executive Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer

Good morning, Chairman Arrington, Ranking Member O'Rourke and distinguished members of the subcommittee, I am Paul Marchand, Executive Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer at Charter Communications.

Thank you for inviting me here this morning to discuss a topic that is vital, not just to Charter, but to the country: improving economic opportunities for our brave men and women through GI Bill-approved apprenticeship programs.

We applaud the committee's history of bipartisanship and commitment to improving the lives of veterans, and we are proud to give back to people who have done so much for this country.

Let me begin with a little about who we are.

Charter is America's fastest growing TV, internet and voice company. We're proud to serve more than 26 million customers in 41 states.

We offer the same, simple, straightforward, high-value products using a consistent and uniform approach to over 50 million homes and businesses.

We serve diverse customers in big cities and rural communities in places like Texas, Florida, Ohio California and Indiana.

In total, we have over 92,000 employees and, since 2012, we've hired more than 19,000 employees in the U.S. We are committed to hiring 20,000 more by 2020, primarily by ending our reliance on offshore call centers.

Every day, our highly-skilled, diverse and U.S.-based workforce helps us deliver better products and better services across our footprint to our customers.

An example of this is in McAllen, Texas, where we just opened a new, state-of-the-art, fully bilingual Spanish-English language call center designed to serve our growing number of Spanish speaking customers. When it is fully staffed at the end of next year, we will have 600 employees there providing support for billing and TV and Internet services for customers who prefer to speak to us in Spanish. Previously calls from these customers were handled at call centers located outside the U.S.

We are proud to say that veterans are a critical group in our workforce.



As a result of active recruitment and expanded outreach, Charter employs nearly 11,900 veterans – 13% of our total workforce. In fact, Charter’s 13% veteran workforce is essentially double the government guideline of 7% for veteran hiring.

This year alone – from January to August – we’ve hired approximately 4,000 veterans and we are committed to increasing our overall veteran hiring by 5% over the next three years.

Our efforts to increase veteran hiring are greatly enhanced by the advice and council of Dr. Clifford Stanley. Cliff is a retired general of the Marine Corps who formerly served as the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. We are extremely fortunate to have him as a member of Charter’s External Diversity and Inclusion Council.

Veterans’ skills translate well to our company

Our veterans are highly skilled problem solvers.

They bring efficiency and a mission-oriented mindset that is effective across all business units and in varying levels of the company including executive leadership.

These are veterans like Jermaine Jackson who served in the U.S. Army, was hired as a technician, and enrolled in our Broadband Technician Apprenticeship Program. Since joining our team, Jermaine has been promoted to our highest level of residential field technician.

Darrel Hegar graduated high school and enlisted in the US Air Force completing five years of service in the military as a Sergeant during Operation Desert Storm. Following his military career, he started a computer company with the skills he learned in the Air Force. He subsequently joined the former Time Warner Cable in 2015 as VP of Marketing and is now, after earning two promotions, the Regional Vice President of the Carolinas for Charter Communications Field Operations leading a team of over 3,000 employees across 3 states.

Employees like Jermaine and Darrel make us a better, stronger company. And, we believe, it’s even better for the people we serve.

That is why we have several programs and partnerships devoted to attracting, hiring and retaining veterans.

Recruit

First, we work hard to recruit veterans by going to where service members start their transition out of military service and into civilian life— on military bases and in the communities in which they are located, which often times are communities we serve.

We understand that the transition to civilian life is just that—a transition.



It is not something you start the day of your discharge from active duty. For us to be successful in our recruitment, it must start before that.

That's why Charter joined a new **Career Resource Center** that opened this July at Fort Bragg in North Carolina.

The center – located on the base – helps companies like ours recruit, train and hire service members who are finishing their military service. Through this partnership with Ft. Bragg, we provide 4 weeks of training to active duty men and women who are in the final stage of their military service. This program allows Charter to begin a relationship with men and women while they are still on active duty. It provides them a taste of what it is like to work as a broadband technician and is the start of a pipeline into our Broadband Technician Apprenticeship Program and an eventual career at Charter. We're excited the first class will begin on November 6th.

Because our relationship at Ft. Bragg is under the **Career Skills Program** we can also offer job shadowing, internships and skills training. This program also allows military personnel to "test drive" new jobs and helps us to recruit service men and women who are both qualified and interested.

We are also identifying and recruiting talented soon-to-be veterans through the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's **Hiring Our Heroes Corporate Fellowship Program**. Service members who are making the transition to civilian life gain hands-on experience working in the private sector, as well as management training, in a 12-week fellowship. Most participants are senior enlisted service members or junior officers and 85% of Fellows have a Bachelor's Degree. Working with Supporting Base, Ft. Carson Colorado, we recently welcomed our first Fellows into our Technology Services Group in Denver, a group led by Group Vice President, Marti Moore, a former member of the U.S. Air Force and military champion herself.

We look forward to offering the Hiring Our Heroes Corporate Fellowship Program in more Charter service areas in partnership with Ft. Carson, Camp Pendleton, Ft. Bliss, Ft. Hood and Joint Base San Antonio.

We view these recruiting initiatives as a success, and we are interested in working with other bases to set up similar partnerships. By meeting our soon-to-be-veterans where they are, we can better engage them and help put them on a path to success.

Train

Importantly, we don't just want to hire veterans, we want to help them build on the technical skills they gained from the military and begin a second career at Charter.

This is where our **Broadband Technician Apprenticeship Program**, a key focus of this hearing, comes in.



This highly regarded program certified by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) provides newly hired broadband installer technicians the opportunity to receive Apprenticeship Certification.

Enrollees in the Broadband Technician Apprenticeship Program complete thousands of hours of on-the-job training and an extensive classroom curriculum over four years.

Qualified veterans who were discharged in the last 10 years can secure GI Bill Benefits by completing the program's qualified curriculum and on-the-job training, putting them in position to possibly earn tax-free money in addition to their Charter paycheck.

Today, over 1,000 technicians are currently enrolled in five states that are home to large military bases: Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, South Carolina and Texas.

One graduate of the program Fabian Luna was hired as an installation technician in 2006 just out of the United States Army. A graduate of the apprenticeship program, Fabian has been promoted five times and currently works as a Field Technician Supervisor in Morrisville, NC.

Scott Feltmeyer, who also completed the program and now works at Charter as a Spectrum Business Technician, is still serving our country in the Illinois National Guard. Scott comes from a military family and he believes the same traits that serve him well in the military – integrity, a can-do attitude, and the ability to operate independently or as part of a team,— translate well to Charter's workforce. He has been with Charter for five years and appreciates that the company enables him to continue to serve his country.

The Broadband Technician Apprenticeship Program has been so successful in producing the highly skilled broadband techs that provide technical services in our customers' homes and businesses that we are working with the U.S. Department of Labor to expand it into a national program. Last May at our technical training center in St. Ann, MO, we were joined by Governor Eric Greitens, a decorated veteran and founder of the veterans' non-profit organization The Mission Continues, along with Congresswoman Ann Wagner, to announce our intent to offer the program across our 41 state footprint.

Our apprenticeship program leads to good paying jobs with generous benefits, and these technicians become valued and essential members of our workforce.

Retain

Once we recruit and train our veteran employees, we work hard to retain them.

Our goal here is simple: create the best possible working environment for our employees by offering competitive pay, robust medical and retirement benefits with opportunities for continued career advancement

Charter's veteran community is a tightly knit group—and we're proud to have 14 company sponsored employee network chapters with over 600 members.

This important employee resource group, known as VETNET, is made up of veterans, family members of veterans, and other employees interested in veteran and military-related issues. It collaborates with Charter's senior leadership to provide mentoring for the growth and development of its members and offers employees opportunities to do work in support of veterans and their families.

For Charter, it goes a long way towards ensuring open communication between our veteran employees and the company.

Finally, we recognize one of the biggest challenges veterans can face transitioning to civilian life is the relocation of family. Next week, Charter will officially join the Department of Defense's **Military Spouse Employment Partnership (MSEP)**. This valuable partnership will facilitate recruitment of this skilled, diverse and unique group of professional military spouses. We're going to be participating in recruitment activities with MSEP across our footprint. Through our work with groups like the Partnership for Youth Success and Recruit Military, we are excited about the recruiting opportunities this new partnership will bring.

Conclusion

According to the Veterans Administration, by 2020 there will be more than 3.4 million veterans who served in post 9/11 conflicts, and 1.8 million of these veterans will be under the age of 34.

In the last few years, we've made a lot of progress making sure these veterans find jobs. According to the Department of Labor, in August, veteran unemployment was at 3.7%, the lowest it has been since 2007.

But this is no time for us to be complacent, as too many veterans continue to face barriers to finding steady well-paying jobs with benefits.

Moving forward, we have a clear sense of what needs to happen to reach our commitment to hire 20,000 additional workers by 2020, with veterans becoming a growing percentage of our workforce. We will do this by:

- Growing our presence on bases to ensure we're reaching veterans before they leave active duty
- Expanding partnerships with key military and veterans organizations, like the VFW and Hiring Our Heroes, among many others
- Ensuring that when veterans are hired, it is not just a job, but they are retained and given opportunities to grow and develop careers
- And lastly, helping to improve the timelines and harmonization with the Department of Labor and other partnering agencies

Our veterans served us at home and abroad at great sacrifice to themselves and their families. Today, thousands of men and women are still in harm's way protecting us.



We owe it to them to make sure that when they leave active duty, they have careers that they can continue to be proud of and that can support their families with good benefits and real pathways to advancement.

With more men and women leaving the military every day, we don't have a moment to lose.

I thank the committee for your time and look forward to answering any questions you have.