

Written Testimony of Larry Smith, Semiconductor Industry Expert

House Committee on Veteran Affairs Subcommittee of Economic Opportunity

Thank you, Chairman Van Orden, Ranking Member Pappas, and Subcommittee members for this opportunity. As a veteran committed to helping others enter the semiconductor industry, I believe these proposals will better connect veterans to rewarding careers.

My name is Larry Smith. After a decade in the Army, including time on active duty and in the reserves after graduating from West Point, I worked 35 years in the semiconductor industry, serving as President and Chairman of Tokyo Electron US for 14 years. Now retired, I have “pivoted to purpose” focused on hiring and housing veterans and serve as Vice Chair of the Governor’s Executive Committee for the Texas Semiconductor Innovation Consortium and Chairman of the Board of Mobile Loaves and Fishes. I have also been on SEMI’s North American Advisory Board.

More than ten years ago, I chose to recruit field engineers from three groups, including veterans. During this period, I was lucky enough to collaborate with my close friend Paul E. Funk II, who later became a four-star General and led the Army’s Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). Paul and I began our military careers as young lieutenants together at Fort Hood, and our friendship has lasted ever since. He helped me and my team connect with key leaders at the Transition Assistance Program (TAPS) and take part in job fairs.

After years of recruiting veterans, I saw that our industry—spanning thousands of companies—could reach far more people than we had so far. I proposed recruiting veterans as a talent pipeline to SEMI’s CEO and presented this idea as a keynote speaker at two major trade shows attended by over 35,000 people last year. My talks addressed why and how to recruit veterans into the semiconductor industry, highlighting their valuable attributes and technical skills.

The Semiconductor Industry Association released an updated report in December 2025 detailing both ongoing and anticipated investments in semiconductor manufacturing facilities. Since 2020, the semiconductor sector has announced more than 140 projects across 28 states, representing over \$600 billion in private investment. These initiatives are projected to create and support over 500,000 U.S. jobs, including 70,000 facility positions, and 122,000 construction roles. This projected growth is anticipated to create significant demand for technicians, rendering these positions well-suited for transitioning service members who are seeking impactful careers that support national security. Currently, semiconductors are integral to geopolitical competition and underpin advancements in artificial intelligence, quantum computing, space exploration, and defense technologies. Collaborative job training programs and efforts to expand the pool of STEM educators can address the talent shortage, with veterans serving as an excellent resource to meet this demand.

Let me share some details on a project in Killeen TX that can be a model to consider.

The Military Talent Pipeline, near Fort Hood, helps service members and their spouses transition to jobs in fields like semiconductor technology and design, STEM education, cybersecurity, data

analytics, and law enforcement. It is funded by federal (HUD), state, industry, and local partners, with the Killeen Economic Development Corporation donating a 25,000-square-foot facility. The project also received a \$2.5 million federal grant for renovating the donated building.

Additional support for the project includes workforce development funds from the TEXAS CHIPS ACT, upcoming appropriations, pending Senate review, a \$2 million fab tool donation from Tokyo Electron, and a \$2 million allocation from the Texas legislature. Collaborative partners include the Texas University System and local community colleges. Texas A&M Central Texas, led by Dr Richard Rhodes, donated \$2 million to Temple College to help establish a semiconductor lab near the new Samsung site. Project leaders are creating the playbook and sharing it with other US regions, including Arizona and New York.

Additionally, I'm proud of our team's work at Tokyo Electron US. Our goal is to be a trusted global partner providing technology that enables life. We've invested billions in US semiconductor manufacturing and R&D, participate in PAYS, and have earned several military-friendly awards from the DOL and DoW. As a member of SEMI VETWORKS, this team helped reach over 150,000 military members through outreach over the last three years. The ChipPath Career Site lists job opportunities from 1,000+ SEMI members and supports military personnel with resources, tools, and career coaching.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the initiatives before this subcommittee today. (HR4015 and Discussion Draft: Improving Emerging Tech Opportunities for Veterans Act). I am happy to answer your questions.