

**STATEMENT**  
**OF**  
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**OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PERSONNEL AND**  
**READINESS**  
**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**  
**BEFORE THE**  
**HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
**SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL**  
**HEARING**  
**ON THE**  
**TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

**APRIL 24, 2013**

Chairman Wilson, Ranking Member Davis, distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the status of the Department's implementation of the requirements of the HR 613 Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) Act of 2011; our progress on the redesign of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and the views of the Department of Defense (DoD) on HR 631, "Service members' Choice in Transition Act of 2013."

Today's Veterans face a number of challenges in making the transition to civilian life. Among them is the opportunity to embark on a productive post-military career. Since 2001, two million men and women have completed their service in uniform to our nation and returned to civilian life. We anticipate approximately 250,000 to 300,000 Service members will separate annually over the next 4 years. Most of us here today are familiar with the unemployment statistics of our veterans. While roughly 19 percent of our enlisted personnel (27 percent within the Army and Marines) separate from active duty from occupational fields that are not easily transferable to the civilian sector (e.g. Combat Arms), our re-designed TAP will assist them in understanding and communicating what great skills and abilities they do bring to our Nation's workforce (like team building, leadership, decision making, problem solving and the ability to perform under stress). To be successful in their transition, we must provide the assistance, curriculum, training, skills building and tools our members need so they are prepared, and most importantly, career ready to achieve their goals in civilian life.

TAP is the cornerstone of the Department's transition effort. In collaboration with the Department of Labor (DOL), and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Department of Education (ED), the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the Department has re-designed the program. In a sweeping overhaul, the two-decade old TAP has been reshaped into a cohesive, modular, outcome-based program that

bolsters and standardizes curriculum, training, services, and opportunities that better prepare members to pursue their post-Service career goals. It is the primary platform used to deliver information on an array of services and benefits to all eligible Service members, including eligible National Guard and Reserve members.

The overarching goal at DoD is to assist Service members in preparing for a successful transition to civilian life and make members ready for their next step – whether that next step is pursuing a higher education, a credential, finding a job in the public or private sector, or starting a business.

## **REDESIGNED TAP**

The redesigned TAP was built around four core objectives:

- **Adopt standards of career readiness for transitioning Service members**

Service members will leave the military having met clearly defined career readiness standards. Career Readiness Standards (CRS) are outcome based standards at the heart of the re-design. Just as a Service member must meet military mission readiness standards while on Active Duty, Service members will meet CRS before their transition to civilian life. They are a set of common and specific associated deliverables (e.g. 12 month post separation budget or a quality resume) focused on individual goals, whether higher education, career and technical training, or civilian employment. Achieving these standards a Service member demonstrates they are “career ready”.

- **Implement a redesigned TAP curriculum (Transition GPS, (Goals, Plans, Success))**

Service members should be provided with a set of value-added, individually tailored training programs, information and services to equip them with the skills and tools they need to make informed decisions to successfully pursue their post-military goals.

- **Implement a “Capstone” Event**

Service members should be afforded the opportunity, shortly before they depart the military, to verify that they have met the CRS’s, ensure they have developed a viable Individual Transition Plan (ITP), received the services they required and, if needed, provided an opportunity for a “warm handover” with Agency partners and steered to additional resources and benefits to help ensure their successful transition.

- **Implement a “Military Life Cycle” (MLC) transition model**

Establishment of the military life cycle will embed preparation to meet the career readiness standards throughout the span of a Service member’s military career, beginning with their Individual Development Plan (IDP).

The redesigned TAP complies with the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011, which mandates all Service members discharged or released from active duty after serving their first 180 continuous days or more (including National Guard and Reserves) on active duty under title 10, shall participate in Pre-separation Counseling, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Benefits Briefings and the Department of Labor (DOL) Employment Workshop.

The redesigned TAP, in particular the Transition GPS curriculum, purposefully balances the military Services' flexibility to modify the program to reflect unique Service culture and existing management systems, while ensuring all transitioning Service members are achieving standard learning objectives and outcomes. Military Departments are afforded the flexibility to modify the program but not change the program's standardized core curriculum or mandatory learning objectives. This flexibility provides opportunities to adjust for Service members' individual transition goals and Service mission requirements. The end state is for each Service member to meet the CRS for the career plan they have chosen, ensuring Service member choice is a key component of this program, no matter from which Service the member is departing.

#### **TRANSITION GPS ELEMENTS:**

The building blocks of the new Transition GPS consist of Pre-separation Counseling, the Transition GPS Core Curriculum, Transition GPS Tracks and Capstone.

- **Pre-separation Assessment and Counseling:** Each transitioning Service member must go through mandatory pre-separation counseling to introduce them to the full range of programs and services available during their transition. While some pre-separation needs are common, other specific needs are identified for individual Service members resulting in immediate referral to installation resources. Needs and referrals are documented in an official form that becomes part of the Service member's permanent personnel file.

Service members are introduced to the requirement of developing an ITP, which helps them determine the actions to take to achieve their career goals. The

newly standardized ITP is a tangible and substantive change and improvement to the previous TAP.

Through the ITP, all Service members, regardless of their branch of Military Service, are required to consider their personal circumstances and plans for moving through this important transitional phase. Sources and/or possible indicators of risk such as family circumstances, housing, finances, employment, personal networks, training and education, gained military skills, and transportation are addressed and personal transition milestones are determined. Additionally, the ITP must contain the concrete deliverables that meet the CRS, e.g., job applications or technical training program acceptance. The ITP is an evolving document that is reviewed and modified throughout the entire transition process.

The mandatory registration in *eBenefits* connects the Service member to benefits and services provided by VA, and other Federal Agencies. This registration gives VA a connection to the Service member for life as well as provides Service members information on their Veterans entitlements, benefits and services.

Our transition efforts also assist those highly trained Active Duty Service members who want to continue to serve in a Reserve capacity following separation. Within pre-separation counseling, Service members will be educated on the opportunity to continue their military service by joining a Reserve Component and will be connected with the appropriate recruiter.

The Service member is also informed about the Transition GPS Core curriculum, the Service member elected tracks, and Capstone. Scheduling for these classes, based upon the goals of the Service member, also takes place. The counselor

will use the pre-separation counseling process to identify Service members in the target population and ensure referrals to resources and individualized assistance are provided.

- **The Transition GPS Core Curriculum includes the following:**
  - **Transition Overview:** The Transition Overview provides Service members with an understanding of the importance of preparing for transitioning from military service. It highlights some of the many challenges that are inherent with any life changing event and the opportunities to receive information and engage with professional and supportive staffs during the Transition GPS program.
  - **Resilient Transitions:** The Resilient Transitions module introduces participants to other key issues such as transition stress, family considerations, the value of a mentor and other issues Service members may encounter as they transition from military Service. These issues may have a significant impact on the transition process if overlooked. The focus of the curriculum is to connect the Service member with helping agencies and staff based on the need for support and guidance.
  - **Financial Planning Seminar:** A workshop on financial planning provides Service members with the information and tools needed to identify financial responsibilities, obligations, and goals after separation from the military. Upon completing the Financial Planning module, Service members will be prepared to build an integrated 12-month post-separation budget that reflects their employment, education, or training goals, ultimately helping to ensure their personal and family financial security. Instructors and financial planning staff

will be available for follow-on counseling as requested by the Service member or as identified by the subject matter expert.

- **Military Occupational Code (MOC) Crosswalk:** The MOC Crosswalk is a module on translating military skills, training, and experience into credentialing appropriate for civilian jobs. Upon completing this module, Service members will have documented their military career experience and skills; translation of their military occupation experience to civilian sector skills; and identification of gaps in their training and/or experience that need to be filled to meet their personal goals. Members will be able to develop a clear path from their military skills and training to their chosen career fields. This will permit a targeted job search and self-development by each Service member. Instructors and education and employment experts are available for further personal assistance.
- **VA Benefits Briefings I & II:** Workshops on VA benefits are divided into four- and two-hour sessions (VA Benefits Briefings I and II) that inform transitioning Service members of their Veterans benefits. VA modules include the VA Education Benefits Briefing (Post 9/11 and Montgomery GI Bills, and other Federal student aid programs). Information for those who have or think they have a service-connected disability is also provided. Under the legacy VA Briefing, this is called the Disabled Transition Assistance Program (DTAP). That information is now embedded in the VA Benefits I and II briefings. The VA Briefings also provide an overview on *eBenefits* and VA health care, as well as information on the full range of other VA benefits and services. Upon completing these modules, Service members should know how to apply for Veterans health,



education, home loan guaranty, insurance, and disability benefits for which they are eligible. Service members will know how to connect with VA staff.

- **DOL Employment Workshop (DOLEW):** The redesigned DOLEW is a comprehensive three-day curriculum that is up to date and current with emerging best practices in career development and is engaging and relevant in light of the unique challenges facing transitioning Service members. Service members benefit from taking the DOLEW because eventually a vast majority of Service members will seek employment regardless of their immediate plans upon leaving military service. Even Service members who intend to enroll in school or start a business will need the skills that are provided during the DOLEW, such as translating their military skills into “civilian speak”, interviewing skills and building a résumé of their accomplishments. At the completion of the DOLEW, post-9/11 Service members will obtain a DOL “Gold Card,” which entitles them to six months of priority services at local American Job Centers, as well as access to case management services. In addition, Veterans and their eligible spouses receive priority of service at all DOL-funded employment and training programs.
- **Individual Transition Plan Review:** Each Service member is required to develop an ITP which, step-by-step, helps the Service member determine the actions they must take to achieve their career goals. Each plan will be tailored, and the documents required by the plan reviewed by the Commanders or their designee. Service members will deliver those products to serve as evidence that they are indeed, prepared for their transition and postured to meet their post-separation goals.

- **Transition GPS Tracks:** Service members may also select one or more two-day tailored tracks within the Transition GPS curriculum: There is a Higher Education Track, for those pursuing college education; a Technical Training Track, for those seeking job-ready skills and industry-recognized credentials in shorter-term training programs; and an Entrepreneurship Track, for those wanting to start a business. In order to meet established Career Readiness Standards, most service members will complete one of these self-elected tracks.
  - **Higher Education Track:** The Higher Education Track addresses such topics as identifying one’s educational goals, education funding, how to research and compare institutions, and how to successfully apply to an institution of higher learning. Upon completion, Service members will be prepared to submit an application to an academic institution, and schedule a session with a counselor from the institution. As needed, Service members will be able to meet with installation education counselors for individualized preparation.
  - **Technical Training Track:** Service members pursuing further technical training and job-ready skills will get help in selecting a training institute/college/program and technical field. The Technical Training Track addresses such topics as how to select a reputable technical training program or postsecondary institution the application process to a school from start to finish, how to use certification finder “Web tools” and other Internet resources. Similar to the Education Track, upon completing the Technical Training Track, Service members will be prepared to submit an application to a career and technical education training

institute/community college/college/program, and schedule a session with a program counselor.

VA provides educational and vocational counseling available in accordance with Chapter 36, Title 38, U.S. Code. Such counseling will be done on an individual basis. VA will provide the application for individual counseling to Service members during their VA presentations. Appointments are made by a Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) counselor upon VA receiving the applications.

- **Entrepreneurship Track:** Service members pursuing self-employment in the private or non-profit sector will learn about the challenges faced by entrepreneurs, the benefits and realities of entrepreneurship, and the steps toward business ownership. Upon completing the two-day Entrepreneurship Track, Service members will have developed initial components of their feasibility study and will be invited to participate in a free 8-week online entrepreneur course (roughly 10 hours per week). Together, the intense two-day and follow-on eight-week instruction provides Service members and Veterans with connections to a small business owner to mentor and guide them through their business start-up. This is a tremendous effort by SBA and we are grateful for their commitment to our Service members.

- **Capstone:** Capstone is a singular activity to take place no later than 90 days before separation which verifies the Service members have met the CRS and have a viable plan to achieve their transition goals. For example, Service members will demonstrate they are financially ready by providing a 12-month post-separation budget. If a Service member has not met the CRS or created a viable transition plan, they will be referred to

the appropriate curriculum, training, or individualized services or counseling for remedial assistance. Each Service will design and pilot their Capstone to fit their TAP redesign processes appropriate for their Service members. Representatives from DOL, VA, SBA, and other community organizations will participate in the Military Services' Capstone processes to ensure Service members connect with the proper resources as they become Veterans. Upon completing the Capstone, all Service members will have been counseled on their ITP, referred to enhanced training and services, as needed, and connected to Agencies and organizations that provide continued benefits, services, and support to Service members when they become Veterans. The Military Services are developing their Capstone activity and we anticipate they will begin implementing Capstone by the end of fiscal year 2013.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

DoD and interagency partners are implementing the redesigned TAP according to the mandates and intent of the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 and the recommendations from the Veterans Employment Initiative Taskforce (VEITF). We have been implementing parts of the redesign since November 2012 and are currently in the second phase of implementation of Transition GPS. It is targeted for completion by the end of fiscal 2013. Furthermore, we are on course toward implementing the Military Life Cycle Transition Model by the end of fiscal year 2014.

The redesign began with the Department, along with our interagency partners, conducting and evaluating seven pilots of the Transition GPS Core Curriculum over the summer of 2012. In total, 954 service members and 14 spouses participated in the pilots. We evaluated these pilot

programs rigorously – seeking the feedback of Service members by deploying a 10 person cross-interagency team to every site.

To help us garner grassroots feedback, we developed Web-based assessment tools for Service members, facilitators, and the team of observers who attended each pilot. The Department also executed five “TAP Auditor Sensing Sessions” as part of our pilot evaluation. We identified those who already completed the legacy TAP, but are still on Active Duty, to go through the redesigned TAP and give us feedback. Overall, the Transition GPS Core Curriculum scored high marks for improved content and skills building.

In the on-line assessments of the core curriculum pilots, we asked military members about their levels of preparation and confidence in their ability to transition from military service. Ninety-five percent of those members reported an increased level of preparation and confidence in meeting the challenges of transition. Assessment results also indicated that the Department had increased Service members’ abilities to meet the established learning objectives.

## **LESSONS LEARNED**

Pilot results indicated these redesigned curriculums were hitting the mark. There has been incredible support across the Military Services, Unit Commanders, installation staffs, and our interagency partners. The revised DOLEW, Financial Planning workshop and VA Benefits Briefings I & II received positive feedback. Feedback indicated that we must align the curriculum across all interagency partner modules to ensure a seamless learning experience and the best use of time for Service members.

The pilots also showed us that Service members value the information, websites, skills building, and practical work they must accomplish in order to successfully complete the

program. For example, the Financial Planning exercise of developing a 12-month post-separation budget illustrated the importance of financial planning and preparedness post military life. Service members have to calculate and document how they will financially meet the first 12 months of post-separation costs for expenditures such as healthcare, changes in the geographic cost of living, dependent care, taxes, medical, transportation, life insurance and such. In the pilots, Service members became very engaged in deliberate personal planning and preparation of their post military budget.

Some additional lessons learned include:

- Service members are learning to translate their military skills into civilian language and to navigate the DOL Labor Market Information website to find details on what employment opportunities exist in their preferred geographical relocation areas.
- Commanders and installation leadership “hands-on” involvement are critical to the success of the pilots.
- Limiting the class size to 50 students is a significant improvement and facilitates engagement and learning. Having classrooms equipped with audio-visual equipment, computers and access to the internet enhances the learning environment.
- The MOC Crosswalk curriculum was confusing to participants and needed modification to meet Service members’ needs.

The Department completed the analysis of all core curriculum pilot evaluations at the end of September 2012 and assembled a group of subject matter and functional experts who modified the curriculums in October 2012. The modified Transition GPS Core curriculum, to include the MOC Crosswalk, was in place by November 21, 2012, to ensure VOW Act compliance and Service members were provided the improved curriculum.

In August 2012, the Department piloted the Accessing Higher Education Track at Joint Base San Antonio and, in November 2012, SBA piloted their Entrepreneurship Track at Mildenhall, England. In March 2013, the Department and VA piloted the Technical Training Track at Quantico, VA. Through these initial pilots we learned more work was needed to ensure these curriculums hit the targets.. As a result, we modified the curriculums and will again pilot these tracks this spring and summer.

Throughout implementation, we continue to gather lessons learned with recommendations to improve our process. We've also established a permanent participant assessment process where our military members give us feedback about each module of the curriculum. We will also track the level of learning against the standardized learning objectives for each portion of the curriculum. Service members will be asked, "Did this program enhance confidence in transition planning? and "To what level was it beneficial in helping me gain the information and skills to better plan my transition?"

This on-going assessment is critical to ensuring the curriculum remains relevant, learning is taking place, and Service members feel prepared to transition from military service and pursue other career goals.

While a traditional classroom will be the primary setting for curriculum delivery, there is a need and desire for virtual approaches to achieve the transition program standard outcomes and to fulfill the "VOW Act" mandatory participation requirements. The availability of virtual delivery mechanisms will enable the Military Services to more efficiently reach Service members who are geographically distant from training locations. Virtual curriculums may also be advantageous for those Service members who find an e-learning environment more engaging

or for those members who would like to repeat portions or all of TAP at various points throughout their military career.

To develop an asynchronous virtual capability on a platform that both Service members and Veterans can access, the DoD, in collaboration with our interagency partners, is leveraging the virtual curriculum and information technology expertise of the DoD Joint Staff's Joint Knowledge On-Line (JKO) team. Leveraging the capability of JKO ensures all asynchronous Transition GPS curriculums will have the same look, feel, and quality interactive features in a familiar, effective and efficient web based environment. The virtual Transition GPS curriculum will be developed, tested and evaluated and deployed for use by Service members and Veterans in the summer of 2013.

## **MILITARY LIFE CYCLE TRANSITION MODEL**

We have learned that we cannot wait until the end of a Service member's military career to help them succeed and reach their goals post separation. We have to start early and afford them the opportunity to consider and develop personal goals, and reach milestones throughout their careers.

Therefore, starting in fiscal year 2014, the Department will migrate from our current TAP program model, which occurs toward the end of a military career, to an innovative Military Life Cycle Transition Model that will start at the beginning of a Service member's military career. The objective of the model is for transition to become a well-planned, organized progression that empowers Service members to make informed career decisions and take responsibility for advancing their personal goals. Service members will be made aware of the career readiness standards they must meet long before their intended separation. They will be engaged



throughout their military careers in mapping and refining their individual development to achieve their military goals and their post-military goals for employment, education, career technical training, or starting their own business.

Service members will have various key “touch points” throughout their Military Life Cycle (MLC) which will provide them opportunities to align their military career with their civilian goals. An example of a key “touch point” within a Service member’s MLC is their decision to reenlist. Leadership plays a key role in working with the Service member and their family to plan for both their next three to six years of service as well as their strategy for achieving their long-term goals

When it is time for the member to separate, their plan for individual development will migrate into the ITP -- a roadmap that will assist the Service member navigate thru their transition process.

The MLC transition model requires Service members meet their individually selected CRS described earlier and then these CRS will be verified at a Capstone activity prior to their separation.

A successful transition is a shared responsibility. Military leadership at every level within the command structure must ensure that Service members receive opportunities to prepare for and meet career readiness standards. In tandem, there must be strong personal involvement by the Service member and his or her family. DoD and our interagency partners are assuming responsibility to provide robust skills building experiences for separating members. The ultimate success of the redesigned TAP will also depend on Service members personally investing in their transition preparation.

## **ADDITIONAL ACTIONS TAKEN**

We are on track with the phased implementation of Transition GPS. By October 2013, our curriculums will include the different tracks for those Service members who elect post separation education, technical training or entrepreneurship as part of their transition plan. By the end of FY14, transition and career readiness will be embedded across the military life cycle. Earlier this month we provided the President with the DoD/VA Veterans Employment Initiative Task Force's implementation plan for the recommendations that we presented and that he accepted in December 2011.

Accomplishments to date:

- We published a Decision-Type Memorandum on 21 November, 2012 which established Departmental policy regarding the re-designed TAP.
- We created an official DoD form called the ITP Checklist (DD Form 2958) which is used to verify Service member has met CRS.
- We coordinated and developed a Web-based capability to document attendance to Pre-separation counseling, the attainment of CRS and attendance at all Transition GPS components which includes demonstrating VOW compliance. No longer are we doing manual tracking and cumbersome paper reporting processes.
- In August we piloted the Accessing Higher Education Track and made revisions as appropriate.
- As stated earlier, we have piloted the VA's Technical Training Track and received extremely valuable feedback. Based on the feedback the VA took immediate action to revamp the curriculum before further roll out. That work is currently ongoing.

- The SBA, to whom we're very grateful, completed their Entrepreneurship Track pilots in January 2013. They conducted at least one pilot for each Military Department. Their curriculum is being rolled out now.
- We have also developed and operationalized a Web-based Transition GPS Participant Assessment for all Transition GPS components to include the Virtual Curriculum which ensures Transition GPS performance is a measurable, outcome-based program and monitored quarterly.
- A formal Memorandum of Understanding is being staffed which, once signed by all parties, will formalize the agreement between the Department of Defense (DoD) and the interagency partners regarding their continued collaboration on and delivery of the redesigned TAP.

By the end of FY 2013 we hope to have these curriculums and the Services' Capstones fully implemented across 206 active component military installations. We'll have the assessment process in place, and we'll be well positioned towards embedding career readiness and transition preparation within the military life cycle.

## **LEGISLATIVE CHANGES**

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of April, the House Veterans Affairs Committee hosted a legislative hearing on the newly proposed "Servicemembers' Choice in Transition Act of 2013" (H.R. 631) legislation. The Department's view is that this legislation would negatively impact transitioning Service members and would significantly impede the full implementation of the redesigned TAP. While the Department believes the intent of H.R. 631 is to improve the transition process for separating Service members by ensuring more of the program is mandatory, we have concerns

over how it would contradict the requirements of the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011, codified in Chapter 58, Title 10, U.S. Code.

With limited exemptions, the VOW Act requires the DOL employment workshop to be a mandatory portion of TAP as almost every separating military member will at some point in their future seek employment. H.R. 631 conflicts with the VOW Act by making the employment workshop an optional choice within a statutorily mandated 5-day program. At the same time, this proposed legislation would make one of the other member selected tracks mandatory. The Department agrees with the original intent of the VOW Act-- all Service members benefit from taking the employment workshop regardless of their immediate plans upon leaving military service because they will need job search skills at some point in the future. The Department of Labor's job search workshop, delivered by contracted subject matter experts, provides those employment skills especially needed by our youngest Service members and those being separated from service involuntarily.

The VOW Act was intended to prepare transitioning Service members to join and be competitive in the labor market and the DoD VEI Task Force has collaborated diligently with DOL to develop, pilot, and launch the Employment Workshop to build job search skills for our Service members. The DOL EW, delivered in full by contracted subject matter experts, is a centerpiece of the TAP redesign and is structured to help Service members meet specific Career Readiness Standards. As a result, the EW currently requires three full days of adult learning instruction. HR 631 limits this EW to two days under the optional election, reducing time for skills practice, thorough skills building and engagement with subject matter experts.

The Department is unable to support this bill, as written, as we believe it would undermine the current implementation of the redesigned TAP, described previously. The

Services and partner agencies are engaged in staffing and training for new curriculum delivery, equipping classrooms with IT capabilities, logistics, establishing data collection processes, and in some cases, actually building classrooms to accommodate the new 50-participant limit standard. The model proposed by HR 631 will cause a re-calibration in many of these activities—with additional costs. Such a re-do would also hamper immediate service delivery to the surge of Service members separating in the near future due to force drawdowns and as combat operations come to a close in Afghanistan and our military departments reshape and resize their standing end strength to meet current and future requirements.

The prescriptive timeframe proposed in HR 631 reduces the ability of the entire redesigned TAP to evolve into the Military Life Cycle (MLC) TAP and to mature to keep pace with changes in adult learning, adjust to include skills-building that our Service members request, and respond to developments in the job search arena. Time needed for specific skills-building could contract or expand. This time-focused mandate could hinder the Services from delivering a program that effectively meets the needs of their individual Service members as those needs change. Further, the virtual curriculum of the entire Transition GPS, accessible 24-7, and available to Service members to take over and over again, will render the prescribed timeframes in H.R. 631 irrelevant.

The Department of Defense, Military Departments and our interagency partners are successfully implementing the redesigned TAP, to enable our Service members to meet CRS. We need time to implement the program and realize the fruit of our efforts. DoD believes that the best course of action at this time is to continue the implementation of the newly redesigned TAP in accordance with the VOW Act and the recommendations of the Veterans Employment Initiative Task Force.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, transition and the career readiness of our the military isn't just about what's best for the Armed Forces, but it is also about what's best for our nation in the years ahead.

Service members are a national talent pipeline and ambassadors for the next generation of our all-volunteer force. The redesigned TAP is a keystone to fulfilling our national commitment to our Service members and it is best to ensure a career readiness mindset is ingrained throughout members' military life cycle. Career readiness, just like military readiness, means empowering Service members with the best training, skills, tools and opportunities to make informed career decisions, prepare for their civilian future and take responsibility for advancing their personal goals.

The redesigned TAP and the Transition GPS components, spread across the span of a military career, will enable our Service members to align their significant skills and experience gained during Active Duty to their future civilian careers. This MLC model articulates the truth that if all goes well, every Service member will, at some point, separate from military service. As each Service member learns from their military experience, every campaign must have an exit strategy. Plan your exit strategy!

That is the redesigned TAP's intended message and intended culture change.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement. On behalf of the men and women in the military today and their families, I thank you and the members of this Subcommittee for your understanding of our critical transition mission and your continued steadfast support.