

Written Testimony for the Record by Military.com / Monster Worldwide

Submitted to the

**SUBCOMMITTEE on ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY for the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

Submitted by

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Thank you, Chairman Wenstrup, Ranking Member Takano, and Members of the Subcommittee for inviting us here today to address important issues associated with veteran employment. Today, I will discuss what Military.com and Monster Worldwide are doing to assist service members in their transition to the civilian sector as they seek employment opportunities.

My name is Terry Howell; I am the Sr. Director for Strategic Alliances and Editorial Operations for Military.com. I joined the Military.com team in 2003 after 20 years of service in the U.S. Coast Guard. My last assignment prior to retiring from the Coast Guard was as a Career Development advisor, where I worked active duty, reservists and their families on issues related to their career, including education, advancement, and transition.

I am currently responsible for Military.com's editorial operations, reaching more than 7 million unique visitors a month and our efforts to build alliances to support veterans and veteran programs. In addition, I have worked on transition related products for both the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Military.com was founded in 1999 with a significant mission: connect service members, veterans, and their families with all the benefits of service and with each other.

Today, we're the largest military and veteran membership organization — 10 million members strong. Military.com's free membership connects servicemembers, military spouses, veterans and their families to all the benefits of service and related resources— government benefits, scholarships, discounts, lifelong relationships, mentors, legislation, news, and much more.

We are proud that our Military.com team is made up of more than 60 percent veterans, including active members of the National Guard, reserve, and military spouses.

In 2004, Military.com joined forces with Monster Worldwide to change the playing field for career and educational opportunities for servicemembers, veterans, and military spouses. Monster's vision of bringing people together to advance their lives, has proven to be a great fit with Military.com's "members first" ethos and our goal of connecting the military community to all the benefits of service. The acquisition did not change our original mission; it has served to increase the scope of what we have been able to accomplish, while maintaining our core values of providing a vital service to those who serve or have served.

In 2006, Military.com worked with Simon and Schuster to publish the Military Advantage, which continues to serve as the most comprehensive guide to military and veteran benefits, and military career information. Today, the book is published through the US Naval Institute Press in Annapolis.

In the mid-2000's, Military.com was contracted by the Department of Defense to develop an online transition assistance program known as TurboTap. The program enabled service members (active and reserve component) to use a simple guided process to create their own Individual Transition Plan (IDP) which they could print or revisit online at any point in the future.

In 2008, Military.com and Monster Worldwide were selected to contribute to the creation of a set of tools for the VAforVets and later the FedsforVets websites. The centerpiece of this project was our Military Skills Translator, which remains the only skills translator/job matching tool that incorporates the full breadth of a service member's career experience and training. Users can include their collateral duties, multiple occupation codes, special assigned duties, and previous civilian employment when using this tool. In its application for the VAforVets website, the Military.com skills translator also serves as the first step in a resume building process, which helps veterans explain their military skills in civilian friendly terms.

Through the years, Military.com and Monster Worldwide have remained focused on supporting service members, veterans, and families through the transition process, the subsequent job search, and finally their gainful employment. During this time, we have created an online transition center which helps veterans track their progress toward a successful transition; published an annual "Veteran Talent Index (VTI)," which serves as a report on the state of veteran employment; and provided direct and indirect support of job fairs, hiring events and other transition assistance workshops.

Through our VTI and continued communication with our members and employers, we have identified some key issues which impact veteran employment. The roots of the issues are communication and commitment. Most vets site an inability to adequately explain their experience in a way that employers can fully understand. Conversely,

many employers site a lack of understanding of a veteran's military work experience and where they fit may in their organization.

In response to this need, we developed products such as our skills translator/job matching tool, which is currently being used by more than 60 companies and trade association. This is providing the tools to help veterans find jobs within individual companies and associations. To ensure we are part of the solution, we have gone so far as to provide these tools at no cost to non-profit organizations like the American Legion, the Enlisted Association of the National Guard, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars and at cost to trade associations like the Northern Virginia Technology Council. We are working to expand this list to include all the major veteran service organizations and non-profit colleges and universities over the next few months.

We have found that the level of commitment by employers to develop a veteran specific hiring processes, online veteran portals, and awareness campaigns has a direct impact on veteran employment. We have found that the companies that are most successful in hiring and retaining veterans are those that have instituted best practices for veteran hiring. For example, the companies which are recognized as the best employers for veterans, have developed specific veteran hiring processes and tools, trained their human resources staff and recruiters on how to review veteran resumes and the best techniques for interviewing veterans, and have created veteran friendly work environments.

Early last year, we decided to do a top-to-bottom review of our website and veteran employment products, and came to the conclusion that what we may have seen as "good enough" was no longer enough to meet the future needs of transitioning service members.

Based on our findings, we have overhauled our website in an effort to improve veteran awareness of our vet hiring programs and products. We also have taken steps to improve the job search and application process, with the goal of increasing the propensity of veteran job seekers to fully complete online job applications, before clicking away. We have added new areas of content to provide employer tools, motivation, and resources to encourage them commit to hiring veterans. We will soon launch our new mobile Military Transition app, which we have developed with help of Citibank. The app will provide personalized checklists and alert notifications to remind service members of where they are on the transition timeline and exactly which tasks need to be completed at any given point in their transition. In addition, we will soon launch a campaign to recognize and celebrate employers who choose to make a pledge to hire veterans. This will include a public listing of employers and a badge which will acknowledge their pledge to hire vets.

Our current suite of veteran hiring products includes the following:

- The Military Skills Translator and Job Matching Tool
- The Transition Center and Mobile Transition Center App
- The Job Fair and Transition Workshop Finder, which provides a list of upcoming events based on distance and date range
- The Military.com/Monster Job Finder, which is a quick means for veterans to search jobs offered by military friendly employers.
- Veteran Talent Portals, which are featured webpages highlighting specific jobs with specific employers
- The Veteran Talent Index, an annual report on veteran employment that includes survey results reflecting employer and veteran points of view
- VSO Veteran Career Portals, which includes customized job finders and our Skills Translator)
- Employer Specific Veteran Employment Products, with companies such as Home Depot, Lowes, Brinks, Citibank, Coca-Cola, etc.

New Initiatives and Future Efforts:

Military.com and Monster are currently working to make further improvements and enhancements to our skills translator. We are developing an education factor to help graduating student veterans find gainful employment – with the very large number of veterans choosing to go school many will face a second transition, this time from full-time student to a professional in the civilian work force. With the addition of academic, training, and certification elements to the skills translator, student veterans will see an expanded list of career opportunities.

In addition, we plan to implement enhancements to the skills translator that will eventually enable veterans, service members, and career counselors to use our platform as a career-path tool, providing service members and veterans the tools and necessary information to help them select the right geographic location, academic degree, job training, and/or certification required to achieve their civilian career goals.

As you may know, Monster Worldwide recently announced the acquisition of Jobr, the leading mobile job discovery app. This acquisition is an important step in delivering on our ongoing mission to create and deliver the best recruiting media, technologies and platforms for connecting jobs and people. As we move forward we will be examining how the app can be used to best impact the military and veteran communities.

We are keenly aware that we cannot solve the veteran employment issue solely through the use of online tools and products -- nor can it be solved in a vacuum. That is why we

are taking steps to change the employment and recruitment industry paradigm from fiercely competitive to a collaborative "veteran-focused" approach.

For example, we are working with several companies, agencies, and organizations to use our online presence to promote their products and events. We are also working on ways to use our products and tools to make other organizations offline events more effective. We are committed to building partnerships and alliances with employers, service organizations, and others to help use our reach, expertise and products to make a positive and lasting impact on the lives and careers of veterans of all ages and all eras.

It is our belief that the employment issues facing veterans is not caused by a single factor, nor is there a single solution. The issues range from unfounded concerns about post-traumatic stress and a lack of understanding of what a veteran brings to workforce, to the disconnect between military training and civilian certification processes.

In conclusion, it is our genuine hope and firm belief that the private sector, federal, and state agencies can work together to increase awareness, provide tools and incentives, and align military training with civilian certification so the veteran unemployment rate can fall below that of their non-veteran peers. We firmly believe the key to solving veteran employment issues is through continued innovation and collaboration.

I would like to thank the Subcommittee for this opportunity to present this testimony and share what Military.com and Monster Worldwide are doing to make a positive impact on veteran employment. More importantly, I would like to thank the members of this committee and their staffs for their hard work and dedication to ensuring our veterans have every opportunity to make a successful transition to the civilian workforce. With overall employment numbers improving, it would be easy to move on, but thankfully you have remained steadfast in your resolve to make sure ALL veterans are given the best opportunity for success.

Mr.Chairman and Members of this Subcommittee, this concludes my statement.