

Legislative Task Force on Veterans' Reintegration

Minutes
May 17, 2010

Participants

Mike Burton
Sen. Martha Schrader
Jack Heims
Jim Booker
Scott McCrae
Pegge McGuire
Brian Worley (Sen. Schrader's Staff)
Joby Reiley (Phone)
Krissa Caldwell (Phone)
Michelle Davidson (Phone)
Elanna Schlichting (Phone)
Don Weber (Phone)
Barry Vertner (Phone)
Fritz Graham (Phone)

The meeting began at 10:10 a.m. and introductions were made.

There was discussion regarding the upcoming Task Force report to the House and Senate Interim Committee on Veterans and Emergency Services on May 26, 2010.

The Task Force began discussions regarding the Draft Findings. Below are the Findings of the committee as of May 17, 2010 in no particular order of importance.

FINDINGS

1. Transitional/Bridge Funding is insufficient to help veterans transition between unemployment and work.
2. Military skills are not routinely cross-checked for college credits.
3. Currently there is no regional or central coordinating authority for reintegration efforts.
4. Currently funding for Fort Oregon is limited to one-year. The website will need continued future funding.
5. Military culture discourages troops from self-identifying medical/emotional/psychological and other reintegration concerns.
6. Current services for reintegrating veterans are significant during the first 6 months in most areas.
7. Not every veteran is eligible for services.
8. There appears to be three distinct 12-month phases that a veteran goes through and services are need for each phase.

9. Veterans seemingly begin to have significant crises at the 18-24 month timeframe.
10. There needs to be a smooth handoff of reintegrating veterans from the military to the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs.
11. Providing reintegration services to Active Duty and Reserve veterans is difficult if they do not self identify.
12. National Guard and Reserve veterans are being redeployed within the reintegration period and they are not healed by the time they redeploy.
13. Returning soldiers are being told by active duty elements that the VA will take care of them instead of being taken care of by the military.
14. Soldiers on terminal leave cannot use VA and Tri-Care is difficult to access in specific areas.
15. VA overwhelmed by large demobilizations that apply for VA health care.
16. Families are essential to the Reintegration of soldiers.
17. Services for family members post deployment are lacking.
18. Unemployment for Oregon's returning veterans is exponentially higher than the national average.
19. Women veterans may experience different reintegration issues than there male counterparts.
20. Marketing an important component of reintegration service delivery.
21. Military takes six months to train soldiers for war and only five days to prepare them for home.
22. An integrated and coordinated reintegration program will require funding (for services and coordination).
23. Upon release from Title 10 orders, a National Guard or Reserve service member is eligible for continued Tricare coverage for a period of time based on the length of their active duty. However, the service member must affirmatively sign up for this continued coverage. Some service member may not properly navigate this application process and thus lose their (and their family's) continued coverage.
24. ODVA's Campus Veteran Service Officer Program has been a successful outreach to student veterans.
25. There are no case workers following veterans through their 36-month reintegration period.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.