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STATEMENT OF
DAVID G. GREINER
AMVETS DEPUTY NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ON

**H.R. 4791, THE DISABLED VETERANS ADAPTIVE HOUSING
IMPROVEMENT ACT;**
**H.R. __, THE VETERANS EMPLOYMENT STATE GRANT
IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2006;**
H.R. __, THE GI BILL FLEXIBILITY ACT OF 2006;
**H.R. __, THE VETERANS LICENSING AND CREDENTIALING
ACT OF 2006; AND**
**AN AMENDMENT TO H.R. 3082, THE VETERANS-OWNED
SMALL BUSINESS PROMOTION ACT OF 2005.**

THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 2006

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

H.R. 4791, the Disabled Veterans Adaptive Housing Improvement Act

- Increases the adaptive housing grant for disabled veterans.
- AMVETS fully supports the bill.

H.R. __, the Veterans Employment State Grant Improvement Act of 2006

- Requires the Secretary of the Department of Labor to establish professional qualifications for DVOPs and LVERs.
- AMVETS supports the goals of this legislation. Will do ask that the Committee work with the veterans service organizations on how DOL-VETS will implemethe new standards.

H.R. __, the GI Bill Flexibility Act of 2006

- Enhances GI Bill educational benefits for eligible veterans wanting to use tuition assistance for certain training programs.
- AMVETS endorses the legislation.

H.R. __, the Veterans Licensing and Credentialing Act of 2006

- Establishes an advisory committee to review and improve certification and licensing procedures for veterans.
- AMVETS believes there is no greater responsibility of DOD and VA than to properly take care of returning soldiers. Therefore, we support the goals of this legislation.

Amendment to H.R. 3082, the Veteran-Owned Small Business Promotion Act of 2005

- Seeks to increase VA contracting opportunities for small businesses owned and controlled by service-connected disabled veterans.
- AMVETS supports the bill, but we would like to see enforcement of P.L. 106-50.

Chairman Boozman, Ranking Member Herseth, and members of the Subcommittee:

Mr. Chairman, on behalf of AMVETS National Commander Edward Kemp and the nationwide membership of AMVETS (American Veterans), I am pleased to offer our views to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity regarding the bills before you today.

AMVETS is a staunch advocate of providing veterans with the benefits and services they *earned* through honorable military service. As a leader since 1944 in helping to preserve the freedoms secured by America's Armed Forces, our organization continues its proud tradition providing not only support for veterans and the active military in procuring their earned entitlements, but also an array of community services that enhance the quality of life for this nation's citizens.

AMVETS applauds this Subcommittee and its efforts to identify, examine and pursue the legislative initiatives necessary for veterans to obtain the services and benefits they richly deserve.

H.R. 4791, the Disabled Veterans Adaptive Housing Improvement Act

H.R. 4791 would increase the amount of adaptive housing assistance available to eligible disabled veterans. Specifically, it would increase the grant allotment that helps disabled veterans make adaptations to their homes. The bill raises the Specially Adaptive Housing grant from \$50,000 to \$60,000 for the most severely disabled veterans, and increases the grant for other disabled veterans from \$10,000 to \$12,000. This bill will be very helpful to veterans who sustained traumatic, life-altering injuries so they may live their lives as independently as possible. AMVETS supports this legislation.

H.R. __, the Veterans Employment State Grant Improvement Act of 2006

This draft legislation would require the Secretary of the Department of Labor to establish professional qualifications for employment in the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) and the Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) program.

The heart and soul of the Department Labor's Veterans Employment and Training Service (DOL-VETS) is the dedicated DVOPs and LVERs staff tasked with facing the employment challenges of hard-to-place veterans. For decades, they have been the cornerstone of employment services for veterans. AMVETS supports the goals of this legislation. Will do ask that the Committee work with the veterans service organizations on exactly how DOL-VETS will implement these new qualifications standards.

H.R. __, the GI Bill Flexibility Act of 2006

This draft bill would enhance GI Bill educational benefits for eligible veterans wanting to use tuition assistance for certain training programs. Specifically, the bill will expand the range of programs for which accelerated payments of educational assistance can be used. Under current law, only veterans seeking jobs in "high tech" industries are eligible to receive accelerated benefits. This bill would expand eligibility to an approved training program as determined by the Secretary of Labor.

The draft bill will make short-term, high-cost training programs more affordable to veterans. Currently, GI Bill benefits are paid as a monthly stipend to the maximum amount of \$1,000. However, any high growth training programs run anywhere from 4 to 6 weeks, and can cost upwards of \$6,000. At most, the GI Bill benefits only offsets about \$1,500 of the veterans' tuition. Accelerated benefits would cover upwards of 60% of the cost of the training program, to a maximum of \$10,000.

Most importantly, this legislation would help address the serious unemployment rate of veterans between the ages of 20 and 24. Veterans in this age bracket have an unemployment rate of over 15 percent - nearly double the rate of non-veterans in the same age group. Accelerating GI Bill benefits for training in high-growth occupations would help place veterans in a good paying, long-term, and secure job. AMVETS endorses this legislation.

H.R. __, the Veterans Licensing and Credentialing Act of 2006

This draft bill would establish an advisory committee to review and improve certification and licensing procedures for veterans. The advisory committee's overall mission will be to facilitate service members with a seamless transition back into civilian life. AMVETS believes there is no greater responsibility of DOD and VA than to properly take care of returning soldiers, and to provide as many tools as possible to assist them in settling back into civilian life. Therefore, we support the goals of this legislation.

Amendment to H.R. 3082, the Veteran-Owned Small Business Promotion Act of 2005

The proposed amendment seeks to increase VA contracting opportunities for small businesses owned and controlled by service-connected disabled veterans. The amendment would require VA to establish a goal for each fiscal year for such contracts. AMVETS supports the amendment.

However, we note that Public Law 106-50, the Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999, established similar goals and ideas which have not yet to been met. The goals of 106-50 were highly noble, but sadly, in the years since its passage, little has been done by the executive agencies to meet them. As a participant in the Task Force for Veterans' Entrepreneurship, AMVETS has many concerns with the lack of implementation of current law. AMVETS would really like to see full implementation and enforcement of 106-50 before any additional legislation ignored.

In closing Mr. Chairman, AMVETS looks forward to working with you and others in Congress to ensure the earned benefits of all of America's veterans are strengthened and improved. As we find ourselves in times that threaten our very freedom, our nation must never forget those who ensure our freedom endures. AMVETS thanks the panel for the opportunity to address these issues.



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April 27, 2006

The Honorable John Boozman, Chairman
Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity
House Veterans' Affairs Committee
Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Boozman:

Neither AMVETS nor I have received any federal grants or contracts, during this year or in the last two years, from any agency or program relevant to the April 27, 2006, Subcommittee hearing on the legislation before the panel.

Sincerely,



David G. Greineder
Deputy National Legislative Director



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David G. Greineder
AMVETS Deputy National Legislative Director

David Greineder joined AMVETS (American Veterans) on May 10, 2004. As the Deputy National Legislative Director (currently serving as Acting National Legislative Director), he is the primary individual responsible for promoting AMVETS legislative, national security, and foreign affairs goals before the administration and the Congress of the United States.

Prior to assuming his current position, David worked nearly five years on Capitol Hill as a legislative staff aide in the offices of Pennsylvania Reps. George W. Gekas and Timothy F. Murphy. He was a key policy advisor for a wide range of issues, including veterans' affairs, and helped manage federal appropriations efforts in both congressional offices.

David completed undergraduate work at Millersville University of Pennsylvania, where he was an assistant of data collection for the Keystone Poll.

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