



Statement of

The Honorable Kenneth Mayfield

Commissioner

Dallas County, Texas

and

President-Elect

National Association of Counties

on

HR 4015, the Jobs for Veterans Act

Before the

United States House of Representatives

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

Subcommittee on Benefits

April 18, 2002

Washington, DC

Mr. Chairman, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify on this important issue. My name is Kenneth Mayfield, and I am an elected County Commissioner from Dallas County, Texas. I currently serve as President-Elect of the National Association of Counties.¹

As you know every county in America is involved in the delivery of workforce development services to our citizens. We provide these services under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and under the guidance of the United States Department of Labor and the states.

Every county in America must be part of a single county or multi-county Workforce Investment Area through which individuals may obtain job training and employment assistance.

NACo believes that veterans, like all others, should have access to the kinds of training and employment assistance that will ensure that they are gainfully employed citizens. We further

¹ NACo is the only national organization representing county government in the United States. Through its membership, urban, suburban and rural counties join together to build effective, responsive county government. The goals of the organization are to: improve county government; serve as the national spokesman for county government; serve as a liaison between the nation's counties and other levels of government; achieve public understanding of the role of counties in the federal system.

believe that the system developed under the Workforce Investment Act is the most productive and logical way by which to provide employment and training services.

For these reasons the focus of my comments will be on your efforts to strengthen the relationship between the Workforce Investment Act and employment and training services for veterans.

The National Association of Counties believes that the proposal that you have set forth in HR 4015 will enable veterans, like all other Americans, to receive the workforce development services they deserve. We believe that, overall, this is an excellent proposal and should move forward.

Before responding directly to your legislative proposal, I would like to share with you the reasons that we believe the Workforce Investment Act is the vehicle by which to deliver workforce development services to all Americans including veterans.

As you may know, the workforce development services that are provided at the county level are provided through a partnership

between county elected officials and local workforce investment boards or WIBs. The local workforce investment boards are controlled by business representatives and chaired by a member of the business community.

The purpose of this partnership is to ensure that local elected officials, who are accountable for federal, state and local funds, and representatives of the business community, who understand the labor and employment markets within their areas, are involved in the direct delivery of workforce development services to all individuals in need of assistance. Local business leaders best know what types of jobs are emerging within their local area and what types of training would ensure that individuals are properly qualified for employment.

In my own county we have an outstanding workforce development system. Working with the business community, our workforce development system is designed to provide a wide range of services to all of our residents, regardless of their employment

status, workforce experience, or educational levels. These services include, but are not limited to:

- Employment Services
- Food Stamps Employment & Training
- Employment Services for Unemployment Insurance

Recipients

- Training and Support Services for Individuals affected by

Layoffs or Imports from Canada or Mexico

- Employment Services for Ex-Offenders
- Employment and Training for Dislocated Workers due to

Imports

- Tax Information and Assistance for Employers
- Access to Child Care
- Employment and Training for Veterans and
- Employment and Training for TANF applicants &

recipients.

In addition, our workforce development system provides individuals with access to a wide range of other services, including housing, transportation, and emergency assistance.

Known as WorkSource for Dallas County, the program operates out of ten one-stop centers located throughout the county.

One group that WorkSource offers employment and training services to are disadvantaged adults and disadvantaged youth.

Services are designed to increase the employment, retention, and earnings of participants, and increase their occupational skill attainment. There are also unique programs for persons who have lost their jobs in mass layoffs or plant closings, or who have been laid off and are unlikely to return to their jobs.

Individuals may also receive childcare services if they qualify financially.

Some individuals are eligible for the Choices program, a program that is funded through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or TANF block grant. Choices provides job search and job readiness classes, basic skills training, vocational

training and support services including transportation to promote self-sufficiency.

Some also receive benefits under the Food Stamp Employment and Training program. That program is designed to assist food stamp recipients become job ready and self-supporting through participation in employment, job readiness, education and training activities, and related support services including transportation.

We also work directly with employers through our Employment Services or ES so that they are able to find qualified workers for their openings by screening applicant lists, scheduling interviews and arranging space for the interviews if necessary. ES also provides job search assistance to workers and in many areas includes job search seminars.

As I have already noted, within my county there are 10 service centers to which residents may report to avail themselves of this range of services, including those for veterans. Veterans, like all citizens, need to have access to the widest range of training,

employment and support services to ensure that they obtain career-oriented and productive employment and the other types of assistance that ensure success on the job. These include follow-up counseling and monitoring, career counseling, assistance accessing other county, state and federal human services and human resources programs, and of course, job training.

More importantly, this bill would make consistent the provisions of Title 38, United States Code, with the provisions of the Workforce Investment Act that broadens eligibility to add veterans with significant barriers to employment and veterans who served on active duty during a war or campaign.

However, throughout the United States veterans are not always receiving the kinds of training and employment services you want them to receive.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, we believe that veterans should have access to the same high-level services as all other Americans through the Workforce Investment Act and its one-stop system.

HR 4015 would achieve this outcome. It would ensure that both core and intensive job training services are available to veterans. The core services – job search assistance and counseling – would be supplemented with job training assistance provided through the Workforce Investment Act.

HR 4015 would also require that services be offered through a service delivery system where a broad range of services may be offered, such as the Workforce Investment Act one-stops. To ensure that this does happen we would urge you to amend page 36, line 20 by adding between the words employment and services the words “ and training”. Thus, Sec. 5 (c) (1) would read, In General. – Section 4101(7) is amended to read as follows: (7) The term ‘employment service delivery system’ means a service delivery system at which or through which labor exchange services, including employment *and training* services, are offered in a manner consistent with the provision of such labor exchange services in accordance with the Wagner-Peyser Act.”

This bill, if adopted, would establish performance standards and outcome measures – critical tools for ensuring that veterans are receiving the services and programmatic outcomes that are required and these standards and measures would be consistent with others established under the Workforce Investment Act.

This concludes my statement and I would be happy to respond to any questions you or the committee may have.