

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3719

To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs a Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 6, 2009

Mr. BUYER (for himself and Mr. MICHAUD) introduced the following bill;
which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs a Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Economic
5 Opportunity Administration Act of 2009”.

1 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF VETERANS ECONOMIC OPPOR-**
 2 **TUNITY ADMINISTRATION OF DEPARTMENT**
 3 **OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

4 (a) ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ADMINISTRATION.—
 5 Part V of title 38, United States Code, is amended by
 6 adding at the end the following new chapter:

7 **“CHAPTER 80—VETERANS ECONOMIC**
 8 **OPPORTUNITY ADMINISTRATION**

“8001. Organization of Administration.

“8002. Functions of Administration.

“8003. Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization.

9 **“§ 8001. Organization of Administration**

10 “(a) VETERANS ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ADMINIS-
 11 TRATION.—There is in the Department of Veterans Af-
 12 fairs a Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration.
 13 The primary function of the Veterans Economic Oppor-
 14 tunity Administration is the administration of the pro-
 15 grams of the Department which provide assistance related
 16 to economic opportunity to veterans and their dependents
 17 and survivors.

18 “(b) UNDER SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC OPPOR-
 19 TUNITY.—The Veterans Economic Opportunity Adminis-
 20 tration is under the Under Secretary for Veterans Eco-
 21 nomic Opportunity, who is directly responsible to the Sec-
 22 retary for the operations of the Administration.

1 **“§ 8002. Functions of Administration**

2 “The Veterans Economic Opportunity Administra-
3 tion is responsible for the administration of the following
4 programs of the Department:

5 “(1) Vocational rehabilitation and employment
6 programs.

7 “(2) Educational assistance programs.

8 “(3) Veterans’ housing loan and related pro-
9 grams.

10 “(4) Veterans entrepreneurship programs.

11 “(5) Programs for homeless veterans.

12 **“§ 8003. Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business**
13 **Utilization**

14 “Notwithstanding section 15(k) of the Small Busi-
15 ness Act (15 U.S.C. 644(k)), the head of the Office of
16 Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization shall report
17 directly to both the Secretary and the Under Secretary
18 for Veterans Economic Opportunity.”.

19 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—The tables of chap-
20 ters at the beginning of title 38, and of part V of title
21 38, are each amended by inserting after the item relating
22 to chapter 79 the following new item:

“80. Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration 8001”.

1 **SEC. 3. UNDER SECRETARY FOR VETERANS ECONOMIC OP-**
2 **PORTUNITY.**

3 (a) UNDER SECRETARY.—Chapter 3 of title 38,
4 United States Code, is amended by inserting after section
5 306 the following new section:

6 **“§ 306A. Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Op-**
7 **portunity**

8 “(a) UNDER SECRETARY.—There is in the Depart-
9 ment an Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Oppor-
10 tunity, who is appointed by the President, by and with
11 the advice and consent of the Senate. The Under Sec-
12 retary for Veterans Economic Opportunity shall be ap-
13 pointed without regard to political affiliation or activity
14 and solely on the basis of demonstrated ability in—

15 “(1) fiscal management; and

16 “(2) the administration of programs within the
17 Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration or
18 programs of similar content and scope.

19 “(b) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Under Secretary for
20 Veterans Economic Opportunity is the head of, and is di-
21 rectly responsible to the Secretary for the operations of,
22 the Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration.

23 “(c) VACANCIES.—(1) Whenever a vacancy in the po-
24 sition of Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Oppor-
25 tunity occurs or is anticipated, the Secretary shall estab-

1 lish a commission to recommend individuals to the Presi-
2 dent for appointment to the position.

3 “(2) A commission established under this subsection
4 shall be composed of the following members appointed by
5 the Secretary:

6 “(A) Three persons representing education and
7 training, vocational rehabilitation, employment, real
8 estate, mortgage finance and related industries, and
9 survivor benefits activities affected by the Veterans
10 Economic Opportunity Administration.

11 “(B) Two persons representing veterans served
12 by the Veterans Economic Opportunity Administra-
13 tion.

14 “(C) Two persons who have experience in the
15 management of veterans benefits programs or pro-
16 grams of similar content and scope.

17 “(D) The Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

18 “(E) The chairman of the Veterans’ Advisory
19 Committee on Education formed under section 3692
20 of this title.

21 “(F) One person who has held the position of
22 Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Oppor-
23 tunity, if the Secretary determines that it is desir-
24 able for such person to be a member of the commis-
25 sion.

1 “(3) A commission established under this subsection
2 shall recommend at least three individuals for appoint-
3 ment to the position of Under Secretary for Veterans Eco-
4 nomic Opportunity. The commission shall submit all rec-
5 ommendations to the Secretary. The Secretary shall for-
6 ward the recommendations to the President with any com-
7 ments the Secretary considers appropriate. Thereafter, the
8 President may request the commission to recommend ad-
9 ditional individuals for appointment.

10 “(4) The Assistant Secretary or Deputy Assistant
11 Secretary of Veterans Affairs who performs personnel
12 management and labor relations functions shall serve as
13 the executive secretary of a commission established under
14 this subsection.

15 “(d) QUALIFICATIONS OF RECOMMENDED INDIVID-
16 UALS.—Each individual recommended to the President by
17 the commission for appointment to the position of Under
18 Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity shall be an
19 individual who has held a senior level position in the pri-
20 vate sector with responsibilities relating to at least one of
21 the following:

22 “(1) Education policy.

23 “(2) Vocational rehabilitation.

24 “(3) Employment.

25 “(4) Home loan finance.

1 “(5) Small business development.”.

2 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
3 at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting
4 after the item relating to section 306 the following new
5 item:

“306A. Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity.”.

6 (c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Such title is fur-
7 ther amended—

8 (1) in section 7701(a), by inserting after “as-
9 sistance” the following: “, other than assistance re-
10 lated to economic opportunity,”;

11 (2) in section 7703, by striking paragraphs (2)
12 and (3) and redesignating paragraphs (4) and (5) as
13 paragraphs (2) and (3), respectively;

14 (3) in section 306(c)(2), by striking subpara-
15 graphs (A) and (E) and redesignating subpara-
16 graphs (B), (C), (D), and (F), as subparagraphs (A)
17 through (D), respectively;

18 (4) in section 317(d), by inserting after “Under
19 Secretary for Benefits” the following: “, the Under
20 Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity,”;

21 (5) in section 318(d)(2), by inserting after
22 “Under Secretary for Benefits” the following: “, the
23 Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Oppor-
24 tunity,”;

1 (6) in section 516(e)(2)(C), by striking “Health
2 and the Under Secretary for Benefits” and inserting
3 “Health, the Under Secretary for Benefits, and the
4 Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Oppor-
5 tunity”;

6 (7) in section 541(a)(2)(B), by striking “Health
7 and the Under Secretary for Benefits” and inserting
8 “Health, the Under Secretary for Benefits, and the
9 Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Oppor-
10 tunity”;

11 (8) in section 542(a)(2)(A)(iii), by striking
12 “Health and the Under Secretary for Benefits” and
13 inserting “Health, the Under Secretary for Benefits,
14 and the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Op-
15 portunity”;

16 (9) in section 544(a)(2)(B)(vi), by striking
17 “Health and the Under Secretary for Benefits” and
18 inserting “Health, the Under Secretary for Benefits,
19 and the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Op-
20 portunity”; and

21 (10) in section 709(c)(2)(A), by inserting after
22 “Under Secretary for Benefits” the following: “, the
23 Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Oppor-
24 tunity,”.

1 **SEC. 4. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS-DEPART-**
2 **MENT OF LABOR-SMALL BUSINESS ADMINIS-**
3 **TRATION JOINT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON**
4 **ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY.**

5 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Chapter 3 of title 38, United
6 States Code, is amended by adding at the end the fol-
7 lowing new section:

8 **“§ 323. Department of Veterans Affairs-Department of**
9 **Labor-Small Business Administration**
10 **Joint Executive Committee on Economic**
11 **Opportunity**

12 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—(1) There is established an
13 interagency committee to be known as the Department of
14 Veterans Affairs-Department of Labor-Small Business
15 Administration Joint Executive Committee on Economic
16 Opportunity (hereinafter in this section referred to as the
17 ‘Committee’).

18 “(2) The Committee is composed of—

19 “(A) the Under Secretary of Veterans Affairs
20 for Veterans Economic Opportunity;

21 “(B) the Director of Homeless Programs of the
22 Department of Veterans Affairs;

23 “(C) the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Vet-
24 erans Employment and Training; and

1 “(D) the Associate Administrator of the Small
2 Business Administration for Veterans Business De-
3 velopment.

4 “(b) ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS.—(1) The Deputy
5 Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Under Secretary of
6 Labor, and the Administrator of the Small Business Ad-
7 ministration shall jointly determine the administrative and
8 procedural guidelines for the operation of the Committee.

9 “(2) The two Departments and the Small Business
10 Administration shall supply appropriate staff and re-
11 sources to provide administrative support and services.
12 Support for such purposes shall be provided at a level suf-
13 ficient for the efficient operation of the Committee.

14 “(c) RECOMMENDATIONS.—(1) The Committee shall
15 recommend to the Secretaries and the Administrator stra-
16 tegic direction for the joint coordination and sharing ef-
17 forts between and within the two Departments and the
18 Administration to promote and administer veterans eco-
19 nomic opportunity programs for education and training,
20 vocational rehabilitation, employment, small business, and
21 homelessness under section 8111 of this title, and shall
22 oversee implementation of those efforts.

23 “(2) The Committee shall submit to the two Secre-
24 taries and the Administrator and directly to Congress an

1 annual report containing such recommendations as the
2 Committee considers appropriate.

3 “(d) FUNCTIONS.—In order to enable the Committee
4 to make recommendations in its annual report under sub-
5 section (c)(2), the Committee shall do the following:

6 “(1) Review existing policies, procedures, and
7 practices relating to the coordination and sharing of
8 resources between the two Departments.

9 “(2) Identify changes in policies, procedures,
10 and practices that, in the judgment of the Com-
11 mittee, would promote mutually beneficial coordina-
12 tion, use, or exchange of use of services and re-
13 sources of the two Departments and the Administra-
14 tion, with the goal of improving the quality, effi-
15 ciency and effectiveness of the delivery of benefits
16 and services to veterans, service members, military
17 retirees, and their families through a relationship
18 among the Department of Veterans Affairs, the De-
19 partment of Labor, and the Small Business Admin-
20 istration.

21 “(3) Identify and assess further opportunities
22 for the coordination and collaboration between the
23 Departments and the Administration that, in the
24 judgment of the Committee, would not adversely af-
25 fect the range of services, the quality of care, or the

1 established priorities for benefits provided by either
2 of the Departments or the Administration.

3 “(4) Review the plans of both Departments and
4 the Administration for the acquisition of additional
5 resources, especially new facilities and major equip-
6 ment and technology, in order to assess the potential
7 effect of such plans on further opportunities for the
8 coordination and sharing of resources.

9 “(5) Review the implementation of activities de-
10 signed to promote the coordination and sharing of
11 resources between the Departments and the Admin-
12 istration.

13 “(e) CONSULTATION WITH CERTAIN ORGANIZA-
14 TIONS.—In carrying out its responsibilities under this sec-
15 tion, the Committee may consult with appropriate organi-
16 zations that promote employment.”.

17 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
18 at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding
19 at the end the following new item:

“323. Department of Veterans Affairs-Department of Labor-Small Business Ad-
ministration Joint Executive Committee on Economic Oppor-
tunity.”.

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