

## Wounded Warrior Project Testifies On VA Job Program Recommendations

WASHINGTON, June 4, 2019 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) testified before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, on efforts to [reform VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment \(VR&E\) program](#). During his testimony, WWP's director of government affairs Derek Fronabarger outlined places where VA has succeeded in its efforts to improve the quality of resources and care available to veterans, and commended it for its incorporation of more modern video and software-based techniques.

"Wounded Warrior Project is extremely pleased with the current IT and case management software updates that VA has and will continue to implement in the upcoming fiscal year," said Fronabarger. "We hope that these new tools will allow the vocational rehabilitation counselors more time to work with veterans and lower the rate of scheduling complications."

WWP also called upon Congress to ensure that improvements are made in the following areas:

- **Program Clarity and Awareness**

- VA and the VSO community should make more efforts to educate veterans on the intent of the program before they apply for VR&E benefits.
- VA should enable veterans to switch to another counselor if they feel their current counselor is not assisting with reaching their employment goals.

- **Subsistence Allowance**

- Congress should increase the subsistence allowance, taking into account the costs of living in rural areas versus living in a city.

- **Quality of Counseling and Financial Assistance**

- VA should develop a pilot program that offers mental health counseling to those with invisible wounds and classes on adapting to the civilian workplace.
- VR&E counselors should emphasize the need to attend medical appointments while participating in the program.

- **Staffing Models**

- Congress should reevaluate a statute that requires VA to maintain a ratio that does not exceed 125 veterans to one full-time VR&E counselor.

- **Self-Employment Track**

- VA and Congress should increase emphasis for veterans to utilize the self-employment track. To promote this track, this should include more collaboration with other federal organizations, such as the Veterans' Employment and Training Service at the Department of Labor and the Small Business Administration.

- **Employment Placement**

- VA should develop a pilot program to streamline veterans who are in the VR&E program into open positions at VA. Currently, there are 45,239 open vacancies at VA and around 125,000 participants in the VR&E program. This seems to be a natural fit for those looking for employment.

- **Program Name**

- VA should remove the word "Rehabilitation" from the name Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program and replace it with something more aligned with modern language usage. Currently, the word "rehabilitation" or "rehab" is often associated with programs for those seeking assistance for substance abuse.

To read WWP's full testimony before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, visit <https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/media/183284/hvac-eo-vre.pdf>. And to learn more about how WWP works with our nation's leaders to improve the lives of wounded veterans and their families, visit <https://wwp.news/Newsroom>.

### **About Wounded Warrior Project**

Since 2003, Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) has been meeting the growing needs of warriors, their families, and caregivers – helping them achieve their highest ambition. Learn more: <http://newsroom.woundedwarriorproject.org/about-us>.

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