

# EXPLORING JOBS FOR VETERANS IN THE ENERGY SECTOR

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## HEARING

BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY  
OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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## **EXPLORING JOBS FOR VETERANS IN THE ENERGY SECTOR**

**Tuesday, May 20, 2014**

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY,  
*Washington, D.C.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:10 p.m., in Room 340, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Bill Flores [chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Flores, Runyan, Cook, and Takano.

### **OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN BILL FLORES**

Mr. FLORES. Good afternoon. We are waiting on the ranking member and I'm going to ask unanimous consent to start the meeting early, without him, and then he can join us when he gets here. Hearing no objection, so ordered.

Good afternoon. The subcommittee will come to order. Thank all of you for joining us here today. Before we begin with today's hearing I wanted to address the current allegations regarding patient wait times and veterans dying while awaiting care from the Veterans Administration.

Like all Americans, I am deeply saddened and disturbed by this ever increasing scandal that is eating away at Americans' confidence in the VA system. The situation that first arose in Phoenix, Arizona seems to be expanding by the day and has even reached my home State of Texas. Last week I sent a letter to Secretary Shinseki requesting that the VA Inspector General's current investigation also include allegations regarding manufactured wait times and allegations of withheld and/or delayed care at the San Antonio, Austin, and Waco VA Medical Centers.

If any of these allegations are found to be true I expect the Secretary to hold himself, his senior leadership team, and all those responsible accountable. I also expect the Attorney General to file criminal charges should they be warranted.

Our veterans have earned the right to the highest quality of health care delivered in a timely manner and anything else is simply unacceptable to me, and to the members of this committee, and to all Americans.

Now on to the topic of today's veterans in the energy sector. When one looks at the basic inputs that are required for a robust economy, you will find the following elements: people; financial capital; research and development; intellectual property; energy; a transparent, stable, and fairly enforced rule of law; and a regu-

latory structure based upon sound science and real world cost benefit analyses. Today we are going to talk about two of the most important of those inputs, people and energy.

From time to time when examining the employment opportunities and training programs for veterans, this subcommittee, along with others, learns about veterans job opportunities that are available in some of the traditional economic sectors that are experiencing rapid growth. This afternoon we will examine how to match unemployed veterans with jobs in the energy sector.

Not only is this one of the fastest growing sectors of our economy, it is also vital to the stability and strength of our economy and to our national security. Recent growth in this sector has put our nation on a path to be energy secure for the first time in decades. This energy revolution has led to a manufacturing renaissance generating attractive job opportunities for hardworking American families that have been hit hard by Washington's failed economic policies.

According to the American Enterprise Institute there has been a 26 percent increase in new jobs in the energy sector since 2008. Other studies have shown that for every one job that is created in the energy sector, six other jobs are created in other segments of our economy.

In order to ensure that veterans are not trapped in low paying careers it is critical to tap into the skills and abilities that they have already learned while they served our country. We want them to find well paying jobs that help both the economy and their families. Hardworking veterans are in luck that the entry level positions in the energy sector are not your average run of the mill lower wage jobs. In fact according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics the average starting salary for oil and gas workers is more than \$34,000 a year, and with only a few years of experience many veterans can earn six figure incomes. I believe that unlike the average citizen veterans are in a unique position which makes them an ideal fit for this thriving energy sector. They are highly motivated, results driven, drug free, team oriented, and they know how to get the job done right the first time.

As our witnesses will share with us today, and based on my own personal experience with three decades in the oil and gas industry, I know firsthand that veterans are a perfect fit for this industry and their career goals. I also want to make it clear that I am not just talking about growth potential within the oil and gas industry. And as someone who has always believed in an all of the above energy strategy, I know that veterans are also great candidates for jobs in all energy sectors, including emerging alternative energy industries.

As we all know the creation of home grown American energy is not only in the best interest of our economy, but it is also of keen importance to ending our dependence on foreign oil. As I stated earlier, this is a key enabler of a robust economy.

Today we will hear first from a panel of schools and training programs that are preparing veterans for careers in the energy sector. And on our second panel we will highlight some of the energy producers and companies who have shown the way in terms of hiring veterans for quality jobs in the energy sector.

With that, I will recognize Ranking Member Mr. Takano for his opening remarks when he arrives.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER, MARK TAKANO**

Mr. FLORES. With that on our first panel today we have Mr. Wesley Carr, President of PEC Safety; Colonel Randy Wooten, President of the Texas State Technical College in Marshall, Texas, and who retired from the United States Air Force. Colonel, I want to thank you for your service. And last we have Mr. Tyrone Everett, the East Coast and Mid/Southwest Regional Director for the Center for Employment Training. I thank all of you for being here today. Mr. Carr, you are now recognized for five minutes. Let us start with you.

**STATEMENT OF WESLEY CARR**

Mr. CARR. Thank you for this opportunity. I wanted to start with just a quick history of what we do so it would explain kind of where we come from.

PEC Safety was started to standardize safety practices in the oil and gas industry. What was happening was contractors who all work for the same oil companies were having to go through multiple programs instead of having one that really was standardized to save time and money. So we have been doing that for several years. It has kind of become the standard for the industry, the Safe Gulf and Safe Land programs that a lot of the industry knows about.

In 2000 we decided to start a program that would help people gain employment, because we kept hearing from these contractors saying we do not have people. We can find people but when we do they are not trained, that type of thing. What happens in the oil and gas industries, when you train people because of the nature of the industry, because of regulations, you can spend a good amount of money just getting a guy ready to go to work. If that guy sees a quarter more an hour down the road, or finds out this is not really for him, he moves on and so do all those training dollars that were spent. So what we did is we came up with some programs that we got funded through the WIA, the Workforce Investment Act. We did that through the federal government but in the states of Louisiana, Texas, Alabama, and Mississippi. And so since 2000 we have been training those people and placing them and we have got over 80 percent success rate in placing those guys.

A couple of years ago we decided it was time to get something rolling for the veterans. And you know, what is coming up in our industry and what is happening now is what they call the great crew change. You have several thousands of workers who are older who are now starting to retire and there is not a good training ground out there to bring in the next generation. So we decided we were going to do something about it, basically. And so we have a partnership. We started a division of our company called Battlefields to Oilfields. And we started a partnership with Young Memorial Technical College in South Louisiana. And we put together some programs to help these guys get jobs.

And so the way we basically do it is we already know that these veterans have skills that transfer great to the oil and gas industry.

They have got the work ethic, they show up on time. Those two things right there will move you up a career ladder in the oil and gas industry, just those two things. The trick, though, is getting your foot in the door. And so the way we have done it, and we have done with, in fact in 2013 we had a 95 percent placement with our veterans. We do that by offering training to them that is valuable, so valuable that it is hard to turn them down is basically our M.O. with that.

So we have partnered with that program down there in South Louisiana. And we have the ability to place literally as many of these people, as many veterans that want jobs in the oil and gas industry, we have the ability and the contacts to make that happen. Right now you know, we are limited by the, basically the rules, with the proprietary schools and that type of thing. So we are limited on our location. But we are working partnerships right now in Texas, North Dakota, with different technical colleges to be able to open up facilities and where we can, or use existing facilities, to be able to fund these types of programs across the nation.

The jobs are numerous. The amount of money that they can make, it is a good bit of money. They make good salaries. We had probably an average of about \$40,000 to \$60,000 with the ones that we placed, and that is based on a six-month working year. So in other words, if they are working in shifts, as you all know how it works, that is not counting any overtime. When they get to the overtime is where the money really starts piling in.

The good news too about all of this is, you know, we are not really putting them in jobs. We are putting them in something that will turn into a career if they put forth the effort. You know, certifications do not equal jobs but successful interviews do. And from there you could turn that job into a career by staying on track.

Right now we have, the VA is, just did an audit on our program, it is actually Young Memorial's program has been audited. And there are a few findings. They have suspended it until they get the report back to us and what we would like to do is be able to, we are going to make this happen one way or the other, if it is with everyone's cooperation or not. We are dedicated to getting the veterans jobs. We have the companies that want them. And we are going to make that connection one way or the other. But we would like to be able to do it with the VA's assistance and with other various programs that are out there that we are researching currently.

So I do not know how this time is going. It seemed to start over. But I hit it already?

Mr. FLORES. You are about 30 seconds over. We can give you about 30 seconds to wrap up and we will go to Colonel Wooten.

Mr. CARR. Okay, sure. So in a nutshell we have already started reaching out. We have partnerships that we are developing across the country. We have about 15,000 companies that we deal with but on this level with the B2O program, our Battlefields to Oilfields, we are partnering in Texas pretty soon, North Dakota, California, and a few other hot spots. Basically hitting the Bakken shale, the different shale and plays that are out there. Because the jobs are out there. We are there to help make that connection.

[THE PREPARED STATEMENT OF WESLEY CARR APPEARS IN THE APPENDIX]



Mr. FLORES. Thank you, Mr. Carr. We appreciate what you are doing. Colonel Wooten, you are recognized for five minutes. By the way, the way the lights work, if the light is green you are within the five-minute time window. If it is yellow, you have got a minute left. If it is red, we need to wrap up. Thank you.

#### **STATEMENT OF COLONEL RANDALL WOOTEN**

Colonel WOOTEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Like my colleague here, I am going to give a couple minutes of overview of what TSTC is, and then I will launch right into it. TSTC was established in 1965 as the James Connally Technical Institute, part of Texas A&M University. It was located in Central Texas at the former James Connally Air Force Base in Waco. JCTS separated from A&M University in 1969 and became an independent state system, with its own nine-member board and the name of Texas State Technical Institute. In 1991 the Texas Legislature elevated the status of TSTC's campuses by designating them a Texas State Technical College. Since its inception, TSTC has grown to include four colleges and several off-site teaching locations.

TSTC is Texas' only state supported technical college. The system currently has four main campuses: Waco, Harlingen, Marshall, and West Texas. The West Texas location has geographically dispersed locations in Abilene, Breckenridge, Brownwood, and Sweetwater.

TSTC Colleges consistently ranked in the top producers of associate degrees in engineering, precision production, computer information systems, computer and information sciences. The Community College Weekly annual report titled Top 100 Associate Degree Producers, TSTC consistently ranks number one in Texas.

TSTC offers more than 150 associate and applied science degrees and certificates and has produced nearly 100,000 graduates in its 49-year history. TSTC Harlingen also offers seven associate of science degrees in biology, computer science, engineering, mathematics, physics, nursing, and health care professions.

The TSTC student is a diverse group. There are 66 percent minorities, 57 percent Hispanic, nine percent Black, less than one percent other minorities within that 66 percent. The rest, 34 percent, are White. The student body is comprised of 40 percent females and 60 percent males and they come from 200 of Texas' 254 counties. And nearly 63 percent are economically disadvantaged.

And now for the veterans part. TSTC is proud to have many veterans and the armed services among its graduates. Of those, many have earned certificates or degrees in instructional programs that support careers in the energy sector. Two of these are, one Sarah Kimball, graduated from TSTC West Texas this year with a degree in computer aided drafting and design technology. She had previously served in the U.S. Air Force and has a bachelors degree in criminal justice. Before graduating Sarah was hired by the Nicholas Consulting Group, a multidisciplinary engineering design firm in Midland, Texas with an above average starting salary. The second example is an eight-year military veteran Christopher Bowdoin, who graduated from TSTC Marshall also this year as a process operations technician, a training which is attractive to a variety of process industries, including chemical, food and bev-

erage, oil exploration, pharmaceutical, power generation, pulp and paper refining, and wastewater treatment. Christopher transferred to TSTC from another college and upon completion of his degree was hired as a field specialist for Chevron, a worldwide energy company.

Veteran enrollment in the current academic year has surpassed 1,000 across all TSTC campuses. Approximately 30 percent of these students are enrolled in instructional programs that support careers in the energy sector. All TSTC campuses are designated military friendly schools, which are those in the top 20 percent nationally and deliver the best experience for our students. Additionally, all TSTC campuses are participants in the Texas College Credit for Heroes Initiative. This initiative is a partnership between the Texas Workforce Commission and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

The strength of TSTC's institutional programs rests in the strong relationships each campus has with business and industry. Each instructional program is supported by an advisory council with members from the industry served by the program.

According to statistics from the Office of Governor Perry, the industry sector contributes more than \$172 billion to the Texas economy and that number is growing every year. The growth is fueled in part by the use of new technologies, such as hydraulic fracking and horizontal drilling. Nearly 900,000 Texans are employed in the energy sector today.

TSTC offers numerous instructional programs which are in high demand in the oil, gas, and wind industries and are booming in Texas. Although many of these programs support multiple industry sectors they are also vital to the energy sector. There are 21 of these programs that provide that support.

Many TSTC students in these programs are veterans and the technical skills they master at TSTC compliment their military training resulting in a very high placement rate for these graduates. We have also developed specialized programs to allow veterans to accelerate their completion time by demonstrating the skills they mastered while in the service. One of those programs is the new competency based educational initiative designed to shorten the time necessary to earn an award. This competency based model does not sacrifice the quality of the skills learned. We began offering this competency based approach in the fall in two of our locations.

In conclusion, without exception the colleges within the TSTC system are committed to serving U.S. military veterans. TSTC is also committed to finding innovative educational pathways for the efficient and cost effective transition of these veterans into the workplace. Texas has long been a leader in the energy sector. However, recent growth in that sector has been exponential. That means veterans will continue to have access to a wide array of jobs. Our partnership with industry through advisory councils as well as collaborative efforts with industry to design specialized curriculum ensure that students graduate with job ready skills that match or exceed industry standards. Therefore when industry wants qualified workers, it comes to TSTC.

[THE PREPARED STATEMENT OF COLONEL RANDALL WOOTEN APPEARS IN THE APPENDIX]

Mr. FLORES. Thank you, Colonel Wooten. Mr. Everett, you are recognized I guess for up to six and a half minutes.

#### STATEMENT OF TYRONE EVERETT

Mr. EVERETT. Thank you, Chairman Flores, and other committee members, for this opportunity. My name is Tyrone Everett and I am the Regional Director for the Center for Employment Training. I recognize my title is quite a handful because I cover the Midwest, Southwest, and the East Coast operations with one of our training opportunities being in El Paso, Texas.

CET is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that has been providing job training, human development, and job placement for over 47 years to hard to serve trainees. In the past 47 years we have placed over 135,000 men and women, including veterans, in marketable living wage careers. The primary purpose of our organization is to train people for full time jobs and get them into the workforce. Our experience, over 47 years is that most people would prefer to be independent and have control of their lives.

CET is training more and more job seekers in green industry sector skills. Our decision about what we train in is driven by our partnership with the industry. All of our skills are driven by what is called a Technical Advisory Committee comprised of industry experts that come and advise us what is going on in the green sector both locally and on the regional levels; because we find that many of our veterans work and play across county lines. This way we are able to remain flexible to move in and out of skills as we saturate the market. We will not train in a skill wherein the industry has been saturated. We will move out of that skill by training the final class, and then move into a new skill—we are looking more and more at the energy sector. In fact, our technical advisory committee members are saying we are going to see greater diversity in the green sector field, not only just heating and cooling but also in the medical fields as well.

Currently we serve about seven percent veterans of all of our trainees, and increasingly we are seeing more and more of them come through our doors—we embrace that opportunity. We hope we get to see more veterans. All 15 of our centers (in five different states) are approved by the VA to serve veterans. What we have found is that in some ways the veteran is very easy to train because they come motivated, and they usually have higher education levels. But they can also be the most challenging because (frequently) veterans that have served in combat, (particularly who have just come out of combat) come with some special needs. And as a result, makes veterans challenging to train. I'll get back to that a little bit later.

I would like to say that providing quality training in new and growing demand green skills is enough to successfully train and transition veterans from military service to civilian work. Yet, more is required to equip veterans with the skills and tools to obtain and maintain their meaningful employment. The other component necessary for success is applied resources. Specifically, immediate intensive supportive services while they are in training that will ad-

dress the pressures that readjustment to civilian life can show for our recently released combat veterans. At CET we take this head on because we use a comprehensive training model that addresses barriers to training while the individual is in training.

Our approach in green technology training uses a hands on contextual model that provides skills training in a simulated workplace and environment. All of our instructors are hired from the industry. Students clock in and clock out just like they might if they were at work. And, from the very beginning they put their hands on the machines and tools that allow them to learn.

But, the most important key to our training is the certification. Without proper certification we find that our veterans and our trainees do not get the jobs. So all of our training and certifications are industry specific.

In closing, I want to get back to what I stated previously about the importance of applied immediate resources. Boots on the ground, what we are seeing and what we are witnessing is that our veterans need to get to their benefits quicker. We are seeing it is sometimes taking too long for them to access those benefits that take down the barriers to training and subsequently into employment. To this end we have only one recommendation to the VA. That is services and benefits are accessed within the first 90 days of discharge is very key if requested. It is crucial they are able to get their transitional resources, (particularly their mental health resources and their housing vouchers) so that they have those barriers out of the way and can focus on training.

And so I would like to state in closing we must all give them the efforts and have the same sense of commitment and dedication they have shown in the service of their country. We all know that they have earned it. Thank you very much.

[THE PREPARED STATEMENT OF TYRONE EVERETT APPEARS IN THE APPENDIX]

Mr. FLORES. Thank you, Mr. Everett, for your testimony. I now recognize the ranking member for five minutes for his opening statements.

Mr. TAKANO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to begin by thanking Chairman Miller of the full committee and Ranking Member Michaud of the full committee for their bipartisan efforts in seeking to address allegations made regarding the Department of Veterans Affairs wait lists. I know we all look forward to the forthcoming report by the Inspector General. Our veterans deserve the best and we will continue to work hard for them and their families. And today we seek to look at another issue affecting veterans, and that is employment.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for calling this hearing on veterans employment and training programs in the energy sector. I was pleased to hear some of the testimony so far about how veterans can use their military experience to find meaningful work in the energy sector.

Traditionally veterans have had some difficulty in translating their military skill set into the civilian work force. The witnesses here today have all dedicated themselves to helping bridge that gap to training and employing veterans who bring tangible skills to the table. I am looking forward to hearing our panelists speak on how

they have successfully matched veterans with job opportunities. I'm also looking forward to hearing about what kinds of job opportunities are available for veterans. The energy industry continues to grow at an exponential rate in both traditional and renewable energy. I understand that the range of available jobs will give my fellow members and I a better perspective on the impact the industry can have for all of our veterans who are seeking employment.

I would like to express my gratitude to all of these organizations, to all the organizations that are present today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for scheduling this hearing today, and I yield back.

Mr. FLORES. I thank the ranking member and I would now recognize myself for five minutes for questions. The first question starts out with a statement. I really like your approach to working with employers to ensure that the training you provide is up to date and marketable for the future success of veterans. And my question for each of you is this to start with. How often do each of you meet with employers to find out how to keep your curriculum up to date and on the leading edge? Let us start with Mr. Carr.

Mr. CARR. Okay. We actually have a few committees that do this, that is made up of the oil companies and the contractors. We have a group called the Operator Development Team and also a Contractor Development Team. And we also have industry regulatory experts on staff and that we reach out to. And so we just make sure, we know we keep our ear to the ground. We know what the new regulations, like the new silica change that came out recently, those types of things. So we also know, we pay attention to region. So in the Midwest, or in the Northeast, you know, middle region, you are not going to need water survival, that type of thing unless they, some of those workers do transfer around. But that is how we do it. We are part of the curriculum committees for those groups and so we are getting it firsthand from the actual companies with regulatory bodies on board.

Mr. FLORES. Okay. Thank you. Colonel Wooten.

Colonel WOOTEN. Yes, sir. We primarily do it through our programs. For instance, the welding program or the diesel program of the industrial maintenance program, each of those would have committees or advisory committees and we meet with them at least twice a year. We also then meet with associations like the Gulf Coast Energy Association that is made up of a lot of different components. And so we meet with those folks about twice a year also. And they always send representatives up and sometimes we go down to their location to meet with them. So it is an ongoing process in actuality.

Mr. FLORES. Okay. Mr. Everett.

Mr. EVERETT. Thank you. We have what is called a Technical Advisory Committee that is comprised of the industry that they represent. Also, all of our instructors are people that we hire from the industry that are specific to a skill, for example heating, ventilation, and air conditioning. We will hire an HVAC man or woman to do the actual training. We keep current by looking at what is going on in the industry. The Technical Advisory Committee meets once a quarter, so that is about four times a year that they meet. They come in and they look at the equipment and tools, the software that we are using, and they for the most part give us their

approval, or say, no we are not looking at, we do not see that widget out here anymore, you have got to change that. So we try to stay on the cutting edge of the technology and resources needed to complete a particular skill.

Mr. FLORES. Okay. Mr. Carr, I do not think you said, Colonel Wooten said they met two times a year, Mr. Everett said they met four times per year, how many times per year does your organization meet with employers?

Mr. CARR. Well we have committee meetings that probably happen about once a quarter.

Mr. FLORES. Okay.

Mr. CARR. And then committee, the subcommittees for training curriculum meet probably once every two months or so.

Mr. FLORES. Okay. Mr. Everett, you had mentioned that our veterans often have problems accessing their benefits. And I am not sure I caught all of what you said. I think you said mental benefit, transportation benefits—

Mr. EVERETT. Yes.

Mr. FLORES [continuing]. And housing. But are you talking about G.I. Bill benefits, or broader than G.I. Bill benefits?

Mr. EVERETT. I am talking about G.I. Bill benefits. They often go back to their representatives locally to try to access those benefits and sometimes the wait is rather extensive. And what we try to do at CET, because we are a holistic approach, we try to wrap around as many local services around them as we can to keep them in training because we know that is where they want to be. But sometimes it promotes a challenge because local resources are sometimes limited. So we try to do our best to keep them in and propped up into training.

Mr. FLORES. Okay. I appreciate your feedback on that. We are working also with the VA to try to create a better more holistic way to get the benefits to the veterans in a quicker manner. And so we still have this tug of war to get that done.

Mr. EVERETT. Thank you.

Mr. FLORES. Let us go to Mr. Carr. Can you tell me about your placement rate? I mean, how many of the folks that come through your B2O program are actually getting jobs and what has been the feedback of the veterans that have been placed in those jobs?

Mr. CARR. Sure. In 2013, which is when we started this program, we have been doing these types of programs since 2000. But in 2013 we placed 95 percent. And so far this year we are around 80 percent. But we are still, some of those people just graduated, so.

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Everett, what is your placement rate?

Mr. EVERETT. Across the board we are right between 70 and 75 percent placement rate across the board. And we have found, and you have one of our testimonials in my packet, our veterans tend to be around the 90 percent—

Mr. FLORES. Great.

Mr. EVERETT [continuing]. That we can keep them in training. And they usually will make anywhere from \$2 to \$3 more an hour than our other trainees once they graduate.

Mr. FLORES. I thank you all. I am going to recognize the ranking member for five minutes for his questions. Mr. Takano.

Mr. TAKANO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Carr, thank you for being here today. Can you tell me, are the credits that are earned by a student enrolled in a PEC program transferrable?

Mr. CARR. Yes.

Mr. TAKANO. And are they transferrable to both regionally accredited institutions as well as nationally accredited institutions?

Mr. CARR. Well the credits that they earn through our programs are, first of all they are industry recognized and they are regulatory, you know, they meet all regulatory requirements. So a group like OSHA will not say, hey, you know, so you are certified, but they will make sure that you meet those requirements. So where they are transferrable is from company to company across the industry. You will see if, you know, ABC Company hires someone, and that veteran has all that training, and they decide that they want to go to XYZ, that training will transfer over. But it is not, these are not college credits—

Mr. TAKANO. It is an industry certification?

Mr. CARR. Yes, sir.

Mr. TAKANO. Okay. Can you tell me the five items that the VA has asked PEC to address—

Mr. CARR. Yes, sir.

Mr. TAKANO [continuing]. For their South Central Louisiana Technical College Program?

Mr. CARR. Absolutely. And just so, to be clear, the approval from the VA is through, we are contracted by South Central Louisiana Technical College. But the findings were that they were, let us see, the 85–15 rule about the public versus the, and so with that ruling we actually have had, they put thousands and thousands of people through these programs, and we have too put over 500,000. But the way we package the VA program, that combination of courses has not had the 85–15. So we should be able to clear that up. They actually, one of them was that they put our corporate office location and said that it was not approved for a proprietary license. But we do not do any training there so that should be simple to clear up. They said that only one person, I believe, qualified through Chapter 31 and the rest were all G.I. Bill, Post 9/11. One was that we are not, like I said earlier, we are not a proprietary school so we were not approved through the VA. So we were using, we were contracted by the one that has the school, the South Louisiana Technical College. And the other is, and I believe we talked to them about this ahead of time. But the food and lodging is part of what they do. Because when they come it is not like a semester where they go to college. They come to our class for basically right now a month straight. And so they are living in, we have created an offshore environment to make sure they know what they are getting into. So they are living on site. They are eating there. They are training in that environment. They are living in the bunks just like they would in an offshore facility. So those were the five things.

Mr. TAKANO. Okay. Can you tell me how you propose to carve out an exception for the in state two-year requirements for PEC?

Mr. CARR. Yes, sir. We actually, well, the only way I would note, are you talking about how we think we could solve that problem?

Mr. TAKANO. Yes.

Mr. CARR. We actually are working on that right now. I do not know how you get an exemption or anything like that from it. This is just kind of new for us. We just want to give veterans jobs, right? So we can partner with different schools that have that, have had that proprietary license. But at the same time these programs that we are teaching the veterans, it is really nothing new. It is things that we have been doing for years and years along with the school. We just have not had it packaged in this exact way and I think that is what is drawing the red flag on it.

Mr. TAKANO. Okay. Thank you. Colonel Wooten, do you see a significant amount of your students who want to continue their education and receive a formal four-year degree, economic degree? Are a significant number of your students wanting to go on to complete a four-year degree?

Colonel WOOTEN. That is possible.

Mr. TAKANO. Are the credits transferrable, the credits earned by TSTC transferrable to other institutions?

Colonel WOOTEN. Yes, sir. We have an AAS degree which is a standalone, typically viewed as a terminal degree because it may be in process operations. We also have matriculation agreements with 12 other colleges and universities in Texas where they can take those with them just like any other two-year school and get a bachelors in applied science.

Mr. TAKANO. And are these typically regionally accredited schools?

Colonel WOOTEN. Yes, sir. All of our schools are regionally accredited.

Mr. TAKANO. That is wonderful to hear. Mr. Everett, can you tell me about the credit transfer? How are your centers accredited? Can you just tell me that real quick?

Mr. EVERETT. Yes. We are accredited through the Council on Occupational Education out of Atlanta, Georgia, and all of our centers are also locally accredited by the states. Our credits are transferrable to the local community colleges.

Mr. TAKANO. Well, that is good.

Mr. EVERETT. Yes, we are a post-secondary school. In fact one of our categories of excellence is that we try to encourage them to continue, along with working, but to continue their education so that they can turn their training into a career track.

Mr. TAKANO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My time is up.

Mr. FLORES. Thank you, Mr. Takano. Mr. Cook, you are recognized for five minutes.

Mr. COOK. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for testifying. And first of all, I am going to ask you a question. You have a lot of experience in this area. I am an employer and I go to you and I am going to say what are the three best things that veterans bring to the table when I am looking at them for hiring? Anybody, real quick answers?

Colonel WOOTEN. Work ethic, discipline, and dependability.

Mr. COOK. Everyone else agree with that?

Mr. EVERETT. Absolutely.

Mr. COOK. Okay. And I kind of figured that one. That one I had figured out. But there is a number of veterans that never make it through the process. Why do you think they wash out? What are



the three things that, you know, if somebody is looking at them, you know, everybody is patriotic, everything, there has got to be something there. And what do you find? Is there a common denominator that comes across, either a stigma that is associated with veterans, or what have you? I know this is a, you know, theoretical question. But there has got to be a reason why sometimes they cannot put it down on paper, or what have you. But there has got to be a reason why they do not get it. Anyone? Yes, sir.

Colonel WOOTEN. Stress. Stress they carry back from combat. Some of the wounds that they have, you do not see them. Some of the wounds are not diagnosed. One of the ways we get around that, or accommodate that would be a better term, is that we have associations of veterans on our campus and we find that when they are amongst their buddies and can share their stories and have people that they believe understand them better than an 18- or a 19-year-old student would, they are more successful. And so we spend a lot of our time in what I call the care and feeding of our vets to make sure they feel like they belong, they have someone to talk to, and they have someone they can depend on.

Mr. COOK. Thank you. Yes, sir.

Mr. EVERETT. Yes. Our three top barriers that we see is transportation, housing, and mental health. Because we provide wrap around services sometimes our veterans, men and women, end up at the Department of Social Services and that hurts their pride. They do not feel like they want to come and serve their country and then end up on welfare. That is not what they want. They feel like they are entitled to services as a result of being a vet and that is where they prefer to get their resources. So we try to work very closely with our local VA to impress upon them that these young ladies and gentlemen, they are not just trying to rob the system. They need these services. And if you can help them, if you could do this in an expeditious manner. Because that is the way they want to go. They want control of their lives.

Mr. COOK. Thank you. Yes, sir.

Mr. CARR. Yes. I want to add too that part of, because there sometimes is not that training in between their services and the job placement, that there is uncertainty from the veteran's side, where he does not, he or she may not know what they are getting into. But there is also a little bit of concern from the employer. When they go through the proper training, then they feel like, well, you know what? This person knows what they are getting into and they have at least achieved this as far as the oil and gas side of things. So there is a comfort level there, too.

Mr. COOK. Let me ask you based upon your answer there, and I think this is something that has happened in the last few years. That I do think there is a stigma because of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and everything else that half the veterans that come out of there are basket cases. And I think the VA, I think we, I think everyone in American society has encouraged that. Yes, the military is stressful. Combat is stressful. But you have got to suck it up, do your job, and get it done. And instead we are conveying this attitude that everyone comes out and they cannot handle them. I am sorry. They had to handle them. And I think that negative approach has almost put a cloud over veterans in general, or oh yes,

here somebody that has got a problem, they are going to use drugs. Or we have concentrated so much on the problems that we have forgotten the hundreds of thousands of people that came out that were successful. And I think sometimes we do it in here, we are always looking at the negative instead of all these positive things which has skewed maybe some of our outlook. So that was a statement, but I want to thank you very much for testifying. I am almost done. Thank you.

Mr. FLORES. Colonel Cook, I thank you for your questions. I thank the first panel for their testimony. We appreciate what you are doing for our nation's veterans and we ask you to keep up the good work. And keep the subcommittee informed as to your successes and your challenges. Mr. Everett, I appreciate you talking about some of the issues that our veterans face with respect to G.I. Bill benefits so keep us posted as you see things change, moving forward.

With that, this panel is excused and we are going to invite the second panel to come to the witness table. On our second panel we have Mr. Jay Hawkins, who is the Vice President for Human Resources for Chesapeake Energy; Mr. Mark Szabo, Team Lead for Military Recruiting at Baker Hughes, and who also served in the U.S. Army Reserve Military Police Corps. We thank you for your service. And finally we have Mr. John Simon, Senior Vice President for Human Resources at Pacific Gas and Electric Company, here on behalf of the Center for Energy Workforce Development. I thank each of you for joining us today. Mr. Hawkins, you are now recognized for five minutes for your testimony.

#### **STATEMENT OF MR. JAY HAWKINS**

Mr. HAWKINS. Chairman Flores and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity today to discuss Chesapeake Energy Corporation's veterans hiring program which has become a remarkable success story for our company. I am Jay Hawkins, Vice President of Human Resources for Chesapeake.

Chesapeake is based in Oklahoma City and is the nation's second largest producer of natural gas and the 11th largest producer of oil and natural gas liquids. We are proud to have helped lead the way in what has become known as the oil and gas shale revolution. This domestic supply revolution has taken place across the U.S. creating jobs, generating significant economic activity, and changing our nation's energy future. This includes reducing our dependence on foreign oil and helping offer energy solutions for some of our allies around the world.

I am here today because as a part of our success in recent years our company is also a top employer of veterans as well as members of the Reserve and Guard. I am honored to say that these employees represent about 11 percent of our total employee base. This is especially significant as this hiring has occurred during a recessionary period when many tens of thousands of veterans were returning home seeking employment. Of note the average annual salary of these veterans at Chesapeake is \$61,500.

Our efforts to recruit military servicemen and servicewomen began in 2008. But what originally started as a small component of our recruiting efforts quickly grew into a organic success. Our

targeted recruiting outreach has resulted in the current employment of about 1,200 veterans or members of the Guard and Reserve in positions ranging from rig hands to engineers. In fact of the nearly 3,000 employees hired by Chesapeake in 2013 about 200 were members of the Guard and Reserve and 230 were veterans.

Initially Chesapeake recruited only junior military officers, lieutenants and captains retiring from the service in specialized positions. But we quickly expanded our efforts to include hiring former enlisted personnel to work in the field realizing these men and women could be a natural fit. For instance, many maintenance and electronic technicians were trained in the military and we were able to naturally transition their experience to the oil and gas industry.

Our specific recruitment efforts include participation in veteran recruiting fairs. Chesapeake attended about 50 in 2013. And a veterans only email address where military candidates can contact our recruiters directly. In total, 15 percent of our 2013 recruiting budget was dedicated to recruiting veterans. The result of the continued success of our program is that today we plan to add military veterans in locations across the country, including Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas, Pennsylvania, and Louisiana, in positions like field engineers, environmental health and safety representatives, pumpers, equipment operators, business analysts, and rig hands.

Once hired, Chesapeake works hard to help our veteran employees during their transition. In 2011 we created CHK Troop Connect, an online community where employees with military affiliation and their families can connect and support each other as they transition to civilian life and begin new careers. CHK Troop Connect offers Guard, Reserve, and veteran employees, and employees with military family members, opportunities to connect with each other, plan activities, and share stories. This group hosts networking events, community service projects, welcome home and farewell gatherings, and other military focused activities. We understand this support and continued transition assistance is vital.

Moreover, just this month we were pleased to announce a new military differential pay benefit for all full time Chesapeake employees who have completed at least one year of employment and are called to active duty or military training for 30 or more days. Under this benefit our company will pay the difference between an eligible employee's Chesapeake salary and his or her military pay as a lump sum amount upon return to work.

While we know that veterans have an unmatched work ethic, commitment to teamwork and leadership skills, we now directly benefit from these skills and contributions on a daily basis. Our CEO said to our employees on Veterans Day 2013 when senior management and supervisors also presented each servicemember with a commemorative coin in individual ceremonies, and I quote, "these individuals provide strength, stability, and commitment to our company in addition to the diverse skills and expertise that are essential to our success."

Mr. Chairman, you have certainly seen the economic and job creation results firsthand in your home state of Texas. And as a number of the members of this subcommittee have seen in your own states the timing of the growth of our industry has made this par-

ticularly great news. Unlike most industries the oil and gas industry has experienced growth during a recessionary period and the outlook for jobs only looks brighter in the future.

In summary, our veterans hiring efforts have truly proven to be a win-win for our company and for the many men and women of our armed services who now have found exciting and rewarding careers with Chesapeake. We are proud that this program provides a solution for our needs as well as our returning veteran employment needs, all while continuing to advance what has become one of the nation's greatest stories, the oil and gas shale revolution.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to be with you here today. I look forward to any questions.

[THE PREPARED STATEMENT OF JAY HAWKINS APPEARS IN THE APPENDIX]

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Hawkins, thank you for your testimony. Mr. Szabo. Did I say that correct?

Mr. SZABO. Yes, sir.

Mr. FLORES. Thank you. You are recognized for five minutes.

#### **STATEMENT OF MR. MARK SZABO**

Mr. SZABO. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Takano, members of the subcommittee, good afternoon. I am Mark Szabo, Team Lead for the Military Recruiting Program at Baker Hughes, Inc. As someone who spent 16 years in service with the U.S. Army Reserve I feel extraordinarily privileged to have made a career out of attracting our veterans to the energy sector. I thank you for the great honor of appearing before you today.

Baker Hughes is a leading supplier of oil field services, products, systems, and technology to the worldwide oil, natural gas, and geothermal industries. While we work in nearly 80 countries approximately half of more than our 58,000 employees are based here in the United States where we conduct the majority of our manufacturing, field services, and research and development. It is here in the United States that advanced exploration and producing technologies have perhaps had the most dramatic effect on increasing oil and natural gas supplies.

This growth brings tremendous job opportunities at a time when a large number of servicemen and women are leaving the military. My mission and that of the entire Baker Hughes military recruiting team is to bring the immense talents and work ethic of our men and women in uniform to bear on energy production. This makes good business sense to us. But in the words of our CEO Martin Craighead, Welcoming our veterans home to meaningful, well paid jobs is simply "the right thing to do."

Baker Hughes has long sought veterans for our field work, where the value of their experience is easily apparent. Mechanical assembly, field operations, machining, repair and maintenance, and logical coordination all fit within this category. However, we seek out veteran applicants at all levels of the company, including in corporate and enterprise positions because we believe that military service fosters core values that align very well with Baker Hughes' core values of integrity, teamwork, performance excellence, learning, and courage. Almost all the members of my team are veterans themselves and we bring that experience to bear on our approach

to recruiting. We have developed a multi-pronged approach to ensure that we are reaching veterans at any stage of the transition to the private sector. We reach out to current servicemen and women at military installations throughout the U.S. and to veterans by participating in military specific job fairs. We also partner with several universities with high veteran populations, as well as state veteran workforce commissions. We encourage veterans who are already members of the Baker Hughes community to refer their former colleagues.

In 2013 we conducted a total of 60 military recruiting events, with that face to face contact translating directly into 175 hires, with many more hires coming through traffic driven to our recruiting website. Our intention is to more than double that number in 2014. I am pleased to report that so far we are on that pace. We held 23 military recruiting events in the first quarter of 2014, hiring an additional 145 veterans. We are essentially hiring a veteran a day.

We believe it is important to continue that engagement beyond the hiring process to maintain it as a consistent thread in our employees' experience. To that end we have established a veterans resource group to support veterans transitioning to Baker Hughes from active duty and to connect them to each other and with mentors within the company, creating a vibrant network for continuing professional and personal development. This program has been enormously popular since its launch in 2013. Seventeen local chapters have already been established in Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and many more are underway in places like California, Colorado, and North Dakota. It will come as no surprise to the subcommittee that these chapters once formed turn their focus almost instantly to making a difference in the lives of other veterans.

Baker Hughes also believes strongly in supporting those employees who continue to serve our country in the military Reserves. We have policies in place to ensure our National Guard and Reserve employees are aware of and receive their benefits. As our employees are called up, Baker Hughes pays the difference between their base salary with us and their military base pay from 30 days annually for training, up to 180 days for an involuntary call to active duty.

Baker Hughes was recently recognized with an ESGR Pro Patriot Award in New Mexico and I am proud to say that the company is a finalist for the 2014 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award. Like our Veterans Resource Group, this is a great program made great through the dedication and spirit of our employees.

We applaud the subcommittee for shining a light on the opportunities available to veterans in the energy industry and we are pleased to do our part. I look forward to the discussion. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mark Szabo appears in the Appendix]

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Szabo, thank you for your testimony. Mr. Simon, you are recognized for five minutes.

**STATEMENT OF MR. JOHN SIMON**

Mr. SIMON. Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, good afternoon. My name is John Simon. I oversee human resources for Pacific Gas and Electric Company, or PG&E. Today I am representing both PG&E and the Center for Energy Workforce Development, CEWD.

PG&E is one of the largest combined natural gas and electric utilities in the country. We serve about 15 million people in Northern and Central California. My job is to provide the talent we need to deliver energy safely, reliably, and affordably to our customers. At PG&E we work closely with CEWD, a nonprofit group of utilities and trade associations, that together partner with labor to address the pending workforce shortages facing our industry.

Four years ago CEWD and the Edison Electric Institute launched the Troops to Energy Jobs Program. The program was piloted by six utilities across the U.S., including PG&E. Its purpose is to connect veterans to utility jobs.

CEWD projects that as many as 200,000 electric and gas utility workers are eligible to retire in the next five years. That is about 40 percent of the utility workforce. Worth repeating, 40 percent of the utility workforce. Beyond these retirements thousands more workers will be needed, engineers, technicians, line workers, plant and system operators, mechanics, welders, cyber experts. And that is because the utility industry expects to invest nearly \$2 trillion to enhance and modernize energy infrastructure over the next decade. At the same time veterans are returning from active duty and are having trouble finding jobs. And it was the Department of Veterans Affairs that determined about 190,000 active duty personnel will leave the military annually over the next 25 years.

The need for a highly skilled utility workforce plus a pipeline of qualified veterans truly creates a win-win opportunity. We need to act and we need to do it now. Our industry has been a leader in veterans hiring. We know the return on the investment. Veterans have the training and skills we require, from their expertise to their inherent sense of safety, duty, and leadership. That is why in 2013 PG&E hired more than 150 veterans. And since 2010 veterans comprise more than seven percent of our overall hires, it is a bit closer to eight percent now. These numbers increase when considering veterans PG&E trained yet placed at other companies.

We believe the right approach to hiring veterans is a holistic approach used by companies like those participating in Troops to Energy Jobs. It includes strategies to identify, train, hire, retain veterans, and like my colleagues have said to mentor them once they are hired. It starts by working with military bases to identify personnel with the right basic skills leaving the military, then translating these skills to energy jobs.

In 2013 Troops to Energy launched a national template for veterans hiring. It is a roadmap that covers outreach, education, recruiting, and retention. It also has guidance on how to transfer military training to energy careers, on continuing education programs to gain new credentials or degrees, and it addresses strategies for identifying candidates with military experience.

PG&E's approach to veteran training and hiring follows the Troops to Energy Jobs roadmap. Our program is called Power

Pathway. And through it we run our Bridge to Utility Worker Program targeting veterans. This program is conducted in partnership with community colleges, workforce investment boards, veterans groups, military bases, and labor to prepare veterans for jobs in the utility industry. It is an ecosystem that makes it work.

Since 2008 more than 450 people have graduated from Power Pathway, including 250 veterans. Today approximately 85 percent of graduates find employment either at PG&E or in the industry, usually with better retention rates based on someone not coming through the program.

In addition to recruiting veterans we are focused like the others on providing mentoring, coaching, training to help ensure we retain and grow the veterans we hire. In 2011 we established a veterans employee resource group to support PG&E employees with military backgrounds. It is now 700 employees strong in just two years.

I will conclude by summarizing what we believe is the most important thing in getting veterans hired and retained, it is actually things. Alignment of military and job classifications; getting information on which bases have personnel with the right skills; access to military personnel during the off boarding process; training programs with targeted veteran cohorts and mentoring programs once hired. As an industry we are very committed to the cause. And I thank you so much for having me here today.

[THE PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOHN SIMON APPEARS IN THE APPENDIX]

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Simon, thank you for your testimony. I will recognize myself for the questions to begin. Mr. Hawkins you talked about the average pay that a Chesapeake veteran makes. What is the average starting pay for a veteran coming into Chesapeake? Do you have that metric off the top of your head?

Mr. HAWKINS. You know, it is, I do not have that exact metric. I would say it is in the forties, is mostly where our starting pay is.

Mr. FLORES. Okay. Okay. Mr. Szabo, do you have those same metrics, average starting salary and average salary for veterans at Baker Hughes?

Mr. SZABO. Unfortunately, sir, I do not have that data.

Mr. FLORES. Okay. Would that be hard to get, to put together?

Mr. SZABO. Probably not.

Mr. FLORES. Okay. If you can, if you could send that supplementally to us later that would be great.

Mr. SZABO. Thank you.

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Simon, do you have that information for—

Mr. SIMON. I do. We have different jobs we are hiring for. But as an example an apprentice lineman would start at \$52,000.

Mr. FLORES. Golly, that is pretty good. If you would, if you can supplementally provide the information for average starting salary for all the veterans that you hire, and then their average for everybody in the company? If it is not proprietary for any of you, that would be very helpful. Because it has always been my opinion that this is a great industry to build great middle class jobs for hard-working Americans, particularly our veterans community.

Mr. Hawkins and Mr. Szabo, you both talked about coming up with a pay differential when Guard or Reserve units are called up. Mr. Simon, does PG&E do the same thing?

Mr. SIMON. Yes, we have a similar policy.

Mr. FLORES. You do?

Mr. SIMON. Yes.

Mr. FLORES. Okay. Do any of you know what the aggregate amount is that you are paying for those pay differentials for each of your companies? Okay. If you can provide it, Mr. Szabo—

Mr. SZABO. Sir, that is going to depend on the individual's rank.

Mr. FLORES. Right, but I mean in the aggregate. Like does Baker Hughes, does that total for Baker Hughes \$20 million a year? Or—

Mr. SZABO. I would not know that detail.

Mr. FLORES. Okay. Okay. If that is not hard to find, that would be great. If it is, again, if it is proprietary, do not worry about it. It is not a big deal. What, Mr. Simon, you talked a little bit about what would make it easier for PG&E to recruit vets, what the Veterans Administration and DoD could do to help make it easier. I would like to have Mr. Hawkins and Mr. Szabo, if each of you could comment on what would make it easier for Chesapeake and Baker Hughes respectively to hire veterans?

Mr. HAWKINS. You know, I think it is back to those wrap around services. I mean, we try to get our employees to benefits as soon as possible. But if anything that people, and especially veterans, struggle with it is access to resources. Even though they know where they are, you know, they may have been provided a list, it is that follow up wrap around services to check back and make sure that they are accessing the right things.

Mr. FLORES. Okay. Mr. Szabo.

Mr. SZABO. Yes, sir. I believe that we are doing a very good job through the ACAP and TAP programs in preparing soldiers and servicemen for the transition. However, some of the pitfall that we see is that they do not have the appropriate certifications at the time that they are still in uniform. So by the time we actually see those individuals out at a military specific job fair, we are trying to give them that information to go and obtain a certification, you know, a CDL license, a Class A with a hazmat certification. Some of them would like to go into project management, so we try to give them some directions on how to go down that road and obtain a PMP certification through the Project Management Institute. Those specific types of certifications for those specific types of opportunities that they are looking for they seem to not be getting that information until they exit the service. So getting that information and perhaps giving them that training while they are still in uniform I believe would streamline the process.

Mr. FLORES. Okay. There are, there is a category of state services. One is called Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialists, or DVOPS, and then another one is called Local Veteran Employment Representatives, or LVERs. Do any of your companies work with DVOPS or LVERs to try to find employees to add to your workforce?



Mr. SIMON. I believe, Mr. Chairman. I do not have the information off the top of my head. I would like to send it to you, if that is okay?

Mr. FLORES. Okay. That would be good.

Mr. HAWKINS. As far as Chesapeake goes, we have dedicated recruiters that work strictly military recruiting and they do utilize both of those.

Mr. FLORES. Okay. They look to the state resources as well?

Mr. HAWKINS. They do.

Mr. FLORES. Okay.

Mr. SZABO. It is the same for Baker Hughes, sir.

Mr. FLORES. Okay. Gentleman, I appreciate your testimony. I am going to yield my time to Mr. Takano for five minutes for his questions.

Mr. TAKANO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Simon, you may know that Congressman Cook and I are both sponsors of a bill that would try to replicate the success of our Work for Warriors program in California. Are you familiar with that program? And does PG&E work with them to place Reservists and Guardsmen?

Mr. SIMON. We do, Mr. Takano. We do, Congressman.

Mr. TAKANO. Well, that is great. Well, thank you. I wanted to ask you, currently where are veterans being trained for jobs in the utility sector? Where are they being trained for jobs in your sector?

Mr. SIMON. In our program?

Mr. TAKANO. Yes.

Mr. SIMON. Power Pathway? They are trained at community colleges which are sprinkled throughout our territory in Central and Northern California. There are several different community colleges.

Mr. TAKANO. So you work with the California community colleges for the training?

Mr. SIMON. We do.

Mr. TAKANO. That is great. Mr. Hawkins, how much does the training institution matter when considering hiring a new employee? Does the institution where a new employee received their training factor into the hiring decision?

Mr. HAWKINS. We do find that some institutions do provide additional training that others do not. We do partner with mostly vocational and technical schools for our field based training.

Mr. TAKANO. And what kind of job training is available for your new hires once they are brought on board?

Mr. HAWKINS. We do. We have specific field based training that we do in house. And if they are brought into a more technical role, a professional level engineering role, we do have in house as well as contracted services for professional development.

Mr. TAKANO. And when you contract out, are they also with the same technical schools or community colleges?

Mr. HAWKINS. It varies.

Mr. TAKANO. It varies.

Mr. HAWKINS. It basically, whatever is required for the job. It could be around automation, it could be around a specific software, it would be equipment based. So then we would be working with whoever our partner is in our field locations.

Mr. TAKANO. And is the cost associated with it picked up by the company?

Mr. SIMON. Absolutely.

Mr. TAKANO. Or is it shared with the employee?

Mr. SIMON. No, it is a company expense.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Szabo, or is it Mr. Szabo?

Mr. SZABO. Yes, sir.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Szabo, have you seen a difference between the quality of institutions where students are trained, are some good, or some better, or some not so good?

Mr. SZABO. Absolutely. There are quite a few universities that we partner with for our field engineer program. Obviously they offer top notch engineering types of degree programs. For our field specialist programs we target two-year particular associate degree types of degrees. Also we target the tech and trade schools. But as you previously asked the former panel, are they regionally accredited, are they nationally accredited? We certainly look for those regionally accredited schools.

Mr. TAKANO. So why do you look for that type of accreditation?

Mr. SZABO. We just actually that those certain accreditations regionally are going through a very high academic rigorous standard.

Mr. TAKANO. And typically these are also fungible credits they can—

Mr. SZABO. That is correct.

Mr. TAKANO. Your employees can also layer another degree on top of this—

Mr. SZABO. That is correct.

Mr. TAKANO [continuing]. Because they are transferrable?

Mr. SZABO. That is correct.

Mr. TAKANO. Well that is great. Thank you so much. I yield back my time, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. FLORES. Thank you, Mr. Takano. Mr. Cook, you are recognized for five minutes.

Mr. COOK. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Simon, first of all I am going to be very parochial. Since you represent California and Pacific Gas & Electric, and the West Coast, I was Chair of the Veterans Committee out there and your company or corporation has done a great job for years. So I appreciate that.

Mr. SIMON. Thank you.

Mr. COOK. As well as the other, the whole energy industry compared to some other people. I think they get it in terms of hiring veterans.

Now I am going to put you on the spot after that and we might as well start with Mr. Simon. You have got a month to go, you are going to retire, you are going to go to England, you are going to become a beekeeper like Sherlock Holmes. And somebody asks you the question, you know, when you had the job, what was the biggest problem with the federal government? Was it getting on bases? Or were they giving you the run around? If you had nothing to lose, you are going out the door, and simple question, right? So could you—

Mr. SIMON. The first problem is that I cannot afford the taxes in England. But past that—

Mr. COOK. How do you pay them in California?

Mr. SIMON. I understand the spirit of the question. I think the biggest issue that I would talk about is the lack of coordination between federal agencies. Whether it is skills translation, getting access to military bases, whether it is having standardized credentials that are recognized by private companies like ours. We deal with the DoD, we deal with the DOE, we deal with the DOL. And I think but to a much lesser extent, candidly we deal with the VA. And it feels like the right hand might now know what the left hand is doing.

Mr. COOK. How about individual, I do not want to call out, or individual service. But do you get the run around when trying to get on bases to—for job fairs? And this question is for everybody. Because that I think we can kind of help you with. But sometimes, you know, certain bases or people get very bureaucratic in their approach to some of these things.

Mr. SZABO. Yes, sir. Actually a couple of my employees are still members of the Guard and Reserve so fortunately they still have the ability to access the base with the ID in their pocket. However, there are times where we do need to access the base with some hiring managers that would like to attend and make on-the-spot offers. And in that case we are forced to obviously go through the visitors center, which takes a little bit more coordination. But I believe for the most part it has been a pretty easy process for us to actually access base.

Mr. COOK. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. HAWKINS. I cannot really add to that. We have had no problems at all getting on base in any of the career fairs that we have attended.

Mr. COOK. Do you share that same concern about the right hand not knowing what is going on with the left hand?

Mr. HAWKINS. I, you know, it can appear that way from time to time. But not knowing what the exact circumstances are, you know, it is hard to say.

Mr. COOK. Yes. After being in the military for 26 years sometimes it was very, very frustrating. But I think that is something we might be able to help in the future in terms of encouraging that cooperative effort when we have one goal and everything like that.

But I appreciate it. As I said, I just want to say your industry seems to be very proactive in offering those jobs and accomplishing that. And I wish more, you know, they talk a lot and they don't do it. And I am kind of a bottom line person. So thank you very much for being here. I yield back.

Mr. FLORES. Thank you, Mr. Cook. We have been trying to work to get the VA and the Department of Labor to work together much more closely and, I don't know, hopefully we will all still be alive when we get that accomplished. But anyway, I want to echo one of the statements that Mr. Cook said, and that is that your companies and organizations get it. And I think the three panelist organizations that were here on the first panel, that those organizations get it as well. And so we appreciate your testimony today. We appreciate what you do for America's hardworking veterans. And you are now excused.

I want to thank everybody that attended the panel today and for the frank discussion on jobs in the energy sector. I now ask unani-

mous consent that the statement from the Veterans Green Jobs be submitted for the record. Hearing no objection, so ordered.

[THE STATEMENT OF VETERANS GREEN JOBS APPEARS IN THE APPENDIX]

Mr. FLORES. Finally I ask unanimous consent that all members have five legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material in the record of today's hearing. Hearing no objection, so ordered. And if there is nothing further, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:22 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

#### APPENDIX

##### BATTLEFIELDS TO OILFIELDS, PEC/PREMIER SAFETY MANAGEMENT, BY MR. WESLEY CARR

###### I. What is B2O?

Battlefields to Oilfields (B2O) is an initiative by PEC/Premier Safety Management that helps veterans get the skills and training needed to obtain successful, rewarding careers in the oil and gas industry. B2O is the brainchild of PEC founder, Charlie Carr.

Mr. Carr recognized that with over 50% of the oil and gas workforce reaching retirement age within the next 10 years, the industry is on the verge of a major labor crisis. At the same time, dismayed by the inordinately high unemployment rate for our returning veterans, Mr. Carr saw an opportunity to help our returning service men and women while simultaneously addressing the imminent worker shortage in the oil and gas industry.

Through the vehicle of B2O, PEC could get training for our veterans in essential, industry-recognized courses and help place them in career driven jobs through the network of employers we have cultivated over the past 20 years of industry service.

By partnering with different schools and training entities around the nation, B2O aims to reach its vision of helping any veteran, regardless of location, find a job in the oil and gas industry. B2O is working on procuring as many different funding sources as possible in order to subsidize our veterans' training in as many different oil and gas occupations as possible. While veterans' benefits are the most readily available funds accessible to our applicants, not all are eligible for them so other forms of funding must be procured in order for all applicants to have equal opportunity to attend.

Our plan is to have multiple approved programs in our network taught by different providers across the United States. These programs will cater to the specific needs of the veterans that attend and to the industry in their area of the country. This will allow us to pair veterans with the training required for the career path they desire and meet the needs of the employers in that geographic region and industry sector.

Upon graduation from a given program, our team of placement professionals evaluates and analyzes graduates and current job openings to connect graduates with jobs that fit their unique skillset, location and job preference. Some of our methods include B2O job fairs held on or near the training location, on-line interview facilitation, and email notifications to graduates and employers.

###### II. How does B2O Work?

B2O is a service that helps veterans obtain the training needed to secure careers in the oil and gas industry. We are not a VA approved program nor do we operate a VA approved program. Our model is to partner with schools and training providers who already perform industry-relevant training that meets the needs of one or more sector of the oil and gas industry. VA approval is not a requirement for partnership with B2O but it does often simplify the enrollment process for applicants; students can pay the individual training providers with any funds available to them. During the application process, applicants are informed of the funding options available for the programs in our network. If VA funding is not available for a given program, other funding must be obtained. B2O is contracted to schools and training providers to deliver administrative support in the form of recruitment, en-

rollment, and placement. While our model focuses on helping veterans find employment, anyone can apply to B2O and attend any program to which they are accepted.

Our process helps the veteran step-by-step from application to graduation. When we receive an application, the applicant is contacted by one of our enrollment specialists to evaluate the applicant's situation in order to help match them with the program that will best fit their needs. Some factors we consider are:

- Current employment status: Will the applicant be able to take off work to train? If so, for how long?
- Type of work desired: In what region and sector does the applicant want to work?
- Willingness to relocate: Is the applicant willing to move to another region to find work?
- Funding: Does the applicant have veteran's benefits? If so, how much? If not, what other funding is available?

Any one of these factors can lead to more questions which will ultimately give us the ability to recommend a training program that we believe will suit the applicant and provide them with the best opportunity to obtain the job they want.

### III. What is the current status of B2O?

We are not a VA approved training provider and as such receive no money from the VA. We instead partner with schools to provide administrative support for their training programs we have determined to be industry-relevant to one or more sectors of the oil and gas industry. B2O has found much success in finding veterans that need work and facilitating the training and placement of those veterans within the Oil & Gas Industry.

The single most important aspect of Battlefields to Oilfields' success is our placement. Without our high placement rate of 95% (2013), B2O would not be able to fulfill its mission of servicing our returning veterans. The high placement rate over the past year for our primary program has largely been due to supplying the Oil and Gas Industry with potential employees that have been trained in the areas companies need most. B2O assesses the demands for training in the industry and helps enroll applicants into programs that train in those areas. This pairing is the key to successful placement of veterans in long-term oil and gas careers.

We have found that the industry is in need of training in the following areas: HAZWOPER, H2S, OSHA General Industry, First Aid, Personal Safety and Social Responsibility, PEC Core Compliance, Personal Survival with Helicopter Underwater Egression Training, SafeGulf, Security Awareness, SafeLandUSA, Confined Space Rescuer, Safety Environmental Management Systems, and Safety Tech.

B2O provides this service to South Central Louisiana Technical College (SCLTC) to facilitate veteran training for their Marine Operations Program for Safety and Skills Training. We are also developing relationships with technical colleges, community colleges, training providers, and nonprofit organizations in order to meet the increasing demand by veterans for oilfield training and demand by employers for trained and skilled workers.

Currently SCLTC's Marine Operations Program for Safety and Skills Training is undergoing a VA audit. VA funding has been temporarily suspended until the audit findings are fully resolved. The VA has found five (5) items that must be addressed and SCLTC is working tirelessly to a resolution. When all the items are addressed, the VA will allow funding to continue.

### IV. What does B2O hope to do?

Battlefields to Oilfields' goals are to enhance veteran employability by providing them with the means to earn a fulfilling career in the oil and gas industry. Through thorough research on our industry and the relationships we have formed with major oil and gas companies as well as their contractor workforce, we have been able to determine the training and qualifications oilfield employers require of their employees. We use this knowledge to determine what training programs to include in our approved program network. Vetting training programs based off of this data allows us to choose programs that directly relate to specific oilfield jobs while giving employers the assurance that the graduates of that program are ready for work.

The success of students that have completed B2O approved programs has led to increased demand not only for training but for the graduates of these programs. Employers want to hire them. The 2013 placement rate for SCLTC's 28-day program is 95% and we have already placed over 80% of students trained this year (2014). Most of the employers hiring these students operate on or around the Gulf Coast, but several students have been hired to work in the Bakken Shale play in North Dakota and other areas around the United States. Anywhere that oil and gas operations are being conducted, students with this kind of training are in demand.

B2O wants to meet the needs of these employers wherever they are by connecting them with a trained and qualified veteran workforce. To do this we will expand our efforts to areas where these employers operate. We will establish partnerships with schools and training providers who have developed training programs that meet the needs of employers in their region and are VA approved or have access to other forms of funding. We will provide administrative support (enrollment, placement, customer care, etc.) to these providers' operations across the country. Additionally, we will form new relationships, or cultivate existing relationships, with employers in the individual providers' areas of operation; this will help facilitate hiring events and further increase graduate placement.

VA funding is not an approval requirement for programs in our network. We are constantly researching other forms of funding, public and private, that will help veterans get the training they need to obtain a career. Programs that are funded by the VA simplify the process, but for those veterans who do not have or have exhausted their veteran's benefits, we must find other no-cost and low-cost options. We envision these possibilities taking the form of private scholarships, student sponsorships, and as yet undiscovered sources. Wherever possible, we want to be able to provide this service at no cost to the student.

#### V. What are obstacles B2O faces?

Battlefields to Oilfields has training facilities to use, companies eager to hire graduates, curriculum guidelines, and receives nearly 600 applications a month. What we lack is multiple VA approved training providers. In order for this initiative to reach full effectiveness we need multiple VA approved programs operating in our network. We need this for several reasons: meeting the demand for training, meeting the demand for a trained workforce, and ensuring that students have options if VA approval for an individual program falls under review. The last of these is an issue we are currently experiencing.

The primary approved program in our network (SCLTC's Marine Operations Program for Safety and Skills Training) is currently under review, during which time VA funding for the program is suspended. B2O has paid out-of-pocket for one class already and plans to pay for another if funding is not restored in time. We are doing this because we do not want to abandon those that have already enrolled, and because we believe that this training makes a tangible difference in the lives of these veterans. We do not want to jeopardize that. Unfortunately that model is not sustainable—we must find another VA approved program to which we can send applicants very soon. This is especially important if SCLTC's funding for their program is not restored.

By securing partnerships with multiple VA approved training providers, B2O will be able to accommodate applicants by pointing them towards trainers who are VA approved even if one of the programs in our network falls under review . . . thereby better meeting the needs of the veteran.

#### VI. What does B2O need?

The need for VA approved programs is very high. Veterans' benefits are the main source of educational funding for most of our applicants. While we know that there is other funding available, nothing can match the scope of Veterans' benefits. Because of this, we need additional VA approved programs available to include in our network. We also need that approval to be predictable, consistent, and compliant with VA standards.

Another possible avenue is obtaining approval for our own coursework and curriculum that B2O could directly administer. This would relieve us from having to solely rely on our partners' approval status. While the majority of graduates will still presumably come from our network partners, approval of our own program would allow us to accommodate more students and more employers in more locations.

This would require an exemption to the VA regulation that requires all VA approved entities to be operating as a school in that state for at least two (2) years. Allowing B2O to receive direct VA funding for training would allow us to reach and place hundreds more veterans than we can currently. It would allow us to set up permanent training facilities across the country and directly control the quality of training students would receive. We would be able to establish roots in local communities and form lasting relationships with employers in that region. This kind of exemption is not without precedent.

## PREPARED STATEMENT OF COL. RANDALL E. WOOTEN, USAF (RET)

*Background and History*

Texas State Technical College (TSTC) was established in 1965 as the James Connally Technical Institute (JCTI) of Texas A & M University to meet the state's evolving workforce needs. JCTI was located in Central Texas at the former James Connally Air Force Base in Waco. In 1967, JCTI expanded to include a South Texas campus in Harlingen. Additional locations soon followed.

JCTI separated from Texas A&M University in 1969 and became an independent state system with its own nine-member Board of Regents and the name Texas State Technical Institute (TSTI). In 1991, the Texas Legislature elevated the status of TSTI's campuses by designating them as technical colleges with the name Texas State Technical College.

Since the inception, TSTC has grown to include four colleges and several off-site teaching locations. The four independent colleges within the Texas State Technical College System are co-educational, two-year institutions of higher education offering occupationally oriented programs with supporting academic courses for certificates or associate degrees. Emphasis is on advanced and emerging technical programs not commonly offered by public junior colleges with a core focus on placement and earnings outcomes. For 49 years, TSTC has been producing top-quality graduates, who are nationally recognized for their highly specialized, technical capabilities and job-ready skills. TSTC's strong relationship with business and industry ensures that coursework focuses on the regional and statewide needs of Texas' employers and leads to success in the job market.

TSTC is Texas' only state-supported technical college system. Its statutory mission is to provide an articulated and responsive technical education system aimed at identifying and addressing industry needs. These two features make TSTC unique among institutions of higher education. The TSTC System currently has campuses in Waco, Harlingen, Marshall and West Texas, with locations in Abilene, Breckenridge, Brownwood and Sweetwater. The System also has off-site teaching locations in Hutto, Ingleside, Red Oak and Richmond, in addition to partnerships with many of the state's public junior colleges.

*Accolades*

TSTC's colleges consistently rank as top producers of associate degrees in engineering, precision production, computer information systems, computer & information sciences, and enrollment of Hispanic students. In Community College Week's annual report titled "Top 100 Associate Degree Producers," TSTC has ranked number one in Texas numerous times in one or more categories and has consistently stayed among the top 50 colleges in the nation in nearly every applicable category.

In the 2012 report, TSTC Waco ranked number one in Texas for graduating the most students in the categories of precision production, engineering technologies/engineering-related fields, and computer & information sciences & support services. In both 2012 and 2013, the college ranked third in the nation for conferring engineering-related associate degrees.

TSTC offers more than 151 Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees and certificates and has produced more than 93,570 graduates in its nearly 50-year history. TSTC Harlingen also offers seven Associate of Science (AS) degrees in biology, computer science, engineering, mathematics, physics, nursing preparatory and health professions.

Since 2009, the TSTC System has generated a 32 percent increase in graduates and a 36 percent increase in job placements. The combined first-year earnings of TSTC graduates are projected to surpass \$56 million in new salaries for Texas—a 54 percent increase over the last four years.

*Demographics*

TSTC students across the System are a diverse group demographically. They are 65.7 percent minority (56.91 percent Hispanic, 8.60 percent black, 0.19 percent other minorities) and 34.3 percent white. The student body is comprised of 39.83 percent females and 60.17 percent males. Students come from 200 of Texas' 254 counties, and nearly 63 percent are economically disadvantaged.

*Veterans at TSTC*

TSTC is proud to have many veterans of the armed services among its graduates. Of those, many have earned a certificate or degree in an instructional program that supports careers in the energy sector.

Sarah Kimble graduated from TSTC West Texas in 2014 with a degree in Computer-Aided Drafting and Design Technology. Sarah previously served in the United States Air Force and has a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. Before graduating,

Sarah was hired and given an above average starting salary by Nicholas Consulting Group, a multi-discipline engineering firm in Midland, Texas. Nicholas Consulting provides process, mechanical, civil/structural, electrical and control engineering services primarily to the oil and gas industry.

An eight-year military veteran, Christopher Bowdoin graduated from TSTC Marshall in 2014 as a Process Operations Technician, training which is attractive to a variety of process industries – including chemical, food and beverage, oil exploration and production, pharmaceuticals, power generation, pulp and paper, refining and wastewater treatment. Christopher transferred to TSTC from another college and, upon completion of his degree, was hired as a Field Specialist for Chevron, a world-wide integrated energy company.

Veteran enrollment in the current academic year has surpassed 1,000 across all TSTC campuses (1,059 in total). Approximately 30 percent of these students are enrolled in instructional programs that support careers in the energy sector.

All TSTC campuses are designated as Military Friendly Schools®, which are those in the top 20 percent nationally that deliver the best experience for military students. Additionally, all TSTC campuses are participants in the Texas' College Credit for Heroes initiative. See [www.collegecreditforheroes.org](http://www.collegecreditforheroes.org). The initiative is a partnership between the Texas Workforce Commission and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. It connects active duty, former and retired military personnel with higher education institutions that maximize their military experience toward college degrees and certificates.

The College Credit for Heroes program complements the efforts of on-campus Veterans Affairs liaisons, who facilitate VA benefits like the post 9–11 GI Bill and other financial aid programs. Additionally, using grant funds, TSTC Waco developed an online tool for veterans, called Credit Crosswalk, so they can determine if college credit can be awarded for their military training. The Crosswalk compares military occupations to TSTC's coursework and is used to determine if military training is transferrable to TSTC. The Crosswalk is available online at [www.uaco.tstc.edu/veterans/militaryoccupations](http://www.uaco.tstc.edu/veterans/militaryoccupations).

#### *Cooperative Efforts With Business & Industry*

The strength of TSTC's instructional programs rests in the strong relationships each campus has with business and industry. Each instructional program is supported by an "Advisory Council" made up of members within the industry served by the program. In each program area, Council members direct the development, evaluation and on-going modifications of curriculum and course content so that graduates possess the knowledge and skills necessary to enter the workforce with little or no additional training.

Often, TSTC campuses develop customized partnerships with businesses to tailor curriculum specifically for the needs of that company. For example, the global corporations Fluor and Bechtel helped TSTC develop a customized curriculum in Welding Technology that includes specific skill sets and an accelerated schedule. Luminant Energy is currently working with TSTC to create a pipeline of skilled workers to meet the company's demand. The company is involved in the recruitment of potential students, selection of candidates in the program, monitoring of the students' progression, and advising on curriculum needs. Graduates leave TSTC with assured employment.

#### *Instructional Programs and the Energy Sector*

According to statistics from the Office of Gov. Rick Perry, the energy sector contributes more than \$172 billion to the Texas economy, and that number is growing. Growth is fueled, in part, by the use of new technologies, such as hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling. Nearly 900,000 Texans are employed in the energy sector today, but Texas anticipates 26 percent growth in employment across the sector from 2010 to 2020, according to statistics released by the Texas Workforce Commission's Strategic Assessment Workforce Program. That translated into 92,776 new energy jobs between 2011 and 2013.

TSTC offers numerous instructional programs which are in high demand in Texas' booming oil, gas and wind industries. Although many of these programs support multiple industry sectors, they are vital to the energy sector. TSTC's degree and certificate programs that support careers in the energy sector are listed below:

- Air Conditioning/Heating/Ventilation Technology
- Drafting & Design Technology / Architectural & Civil Drafting
- Building Construction Technology
- Welding Technology
- Computer Maintenance Technology
- Computer Networking & Systems Technology



- Instrumentation & Robotics Technology
- Diesel Equipment Technology
- Environmental Health & Safety Technology
- Electrical Power & Controls Technology
- Electrical Systems Technology
- Industrial Systems Technology
- Mechanical Engineering Technology
- Plumbing & Pipefitting Technology
- Civil Engineering/Surveying Technology
- Chemical Technology
- Mechatronics Technology
- Wind Energy Technology
- Process Operator Technology
- Applied Engineering Technology
- Oil & Gas—Downhole Tool Technician

#### Instructional Delivery Specializations

Many TSTC students in these programs are veterans, and the technical skills they master at TSTC complement their military training, resulting in a very high placement rate for these graduates. TSTC has developed specialized programs that allow veterans to accelerate their completion time by demonstrating the skills they mastered during their service, thereby getting them to the workforce more quickly.

One such program is a new competency-based educational initiative designed to shorten the time necessary to earn an award. The new competency-based education model, however, does not sacrifice the quality of the skills learned. TSTC began offering this competency-based approach in the fall of 2013 at two locations. The model aligns particularly well with the needs of veterans, displaced workers and career-focused high school graduates.

Competency-based programming is designed to allow a student to demonstrate mastery of real-world job skills at his or her own pace. In this way, a student will not spend unnecessary “seat time” in classes reviewing information he or she already knows, either through past job experience or through military service. As a result, a two-year welding degree can now be completed in as few as four semesters—saving time and money while minimizing a student’s deferred wages. Competency programming also ensures that the student learns and masters each required skill, rather than simply earning an average score for a semester-long course.

#### *Conclusion*

Without exception, the colleges within the TSTC System are committed to serving U.S. military veterans. TSTC is also committed to finding innovative educational pathways for the efficient and cost-effective transition of veterans into the workplace. The competency-based learning prototype is one such pathway. As part of Texas’ Skilled Workforce Initiative, the prototype is intended for statewide implementation and is geared toward assisting veterans wanting to maximize military training and earn a college credential. With the competency-based learning model in place and access to the Credit Crosswalk, veterans attending TSTC are able to make the most of their military training as they successfully transition into the civilian workforce.

Texas has long been a leader in the energy sector; however, recent growth in that sector has been exponential. That means veterans will continue to have access to a wide array of jobs. TSTC’s partnerships with industry through Advisory Councils, as well as collaborative efforts with industry to design specialized curriculum, ensure that students graduate with job-ready skills which match or exceed industry standards. Business and industry groups across Texas well understand TSTC’s commitment to hands-on training and a highly skilled workforce. Therefore, when industry wants qualified workers, it comes to TSTC.

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#### PREPARED STATEMENT OF TYRONE EVERETT, MSW

Good afternoon, thank you for inviting me today. My name is Tyrone Everett, I am the East Coast, Mid and Southwest Regional Director of Center for Employment Training, also known as CET. We are a 501(C)(3), not-for-profit organization that has been providing skill training and human development services to very poor and hard-to-serve individuals since 1967. In our history CET has trained and placed over 135,000 men and women including veterans in marketable, living wage jobs. The primary purpose of our organization is to train people for full time jobs and

get them into the workforce. Our experience over 47 years is that most people would prefer to be independent, and have control of their own lives!

CET is training more and more job seekers in green energy sector skills. Our decision making about what occupational courses to offer is unique because it is largely governed by partnerships with private industry and the market sector. Each CET training center has an employer based-Technical Advisory Committee that provides guidance and leadership in which skills are in demand in the local or regional area. They advise us on what are the most current and cutting edge applications and equipment used in a skill sector. This way we are always able to remain flexible and move when new opportunities come up to train in a growing occupational sector. All of our industry advisors say the same thing:

The green energy sector is only going to get bigger and will soon spread to more diverse markets.

Currently, about seven percent of our trainees are veterans, and increasingly we are seeing more and more vets coming through our doors. We are approved by the VA to serve veterans in all of our 15 centers in five states and ready to train more of them. In some ways, veterans are the easiest students to train because they have higher levels of education than most individuals seeking vocational skill training, they are also disciplined and motivated. But, they can also be the most challenging to train, because frequently, veterans that have served in combat, particularly recently discharged veterans, have needs that are unique to their experience in the service to their country!

I'd like to tell you that providing quality training in new and growing demand skills, such as green construction, or green heating and cooling technology is enough to successfully transition veterans from military service to the civilian workforce. Yet more is required to equip veterans with the skills and tools to obtain and retain meaningful employment. The other component that is necessary for success is applied resources—specifically immediate intensive supportive services that can address the pressure that readjustment to civilian society can bring. CET takes this head on in our training model and offers a full menu of supportive services that help to keep our veterans in training and overcome roadblocks to achieving their career goals.

Our approach in green technologies training for veterans uses a hands-on “contextual model” that provides skill training in a simulated workplace environment. Students clock in and out just like they might at work and from the very beginning, they get their “hands on the machine” and learn in large part by doing.

We provide the most up to date, technologically current training. Being on top of the newest technological trends helps to advance veterans’ career prospects in green technology occupations. Part of that effort, and this is a KEY component, is that in addition to offering relevant job training, we assist our veterans to earn industry-specific credentials and certifications. In this way, when our job development staffs start the process of helping our veterans to obtain employment, the student is already ahead of the game because he or she has industry-specific certifications that make them much more employable. This is the new trend and a vital component of successfully obtaining employment.

In closing, I want to get back to what I stated previously about the importance of applied immediate supportive services to keep the veteran in training. An intensive case management approach to remove potential barriers to success is very important. The best training in the world in the hottest occupation or industry sector is of no use to a discouraged veteran that drops out of training because of a lack of immediate support and resources.

To this end, we have one recommendation! That the VA help veterans access the education and housing benefits that they are entitled to as quickly and efficiently as possible. The first 90 days after a veteran is discharged is a fragile period that demands that all of us respond with the utmost urgency. In the military, especially when in combat, immediacy is the order of the day. To do otherwise could be a disaster. Discharged veterans feel the need for a similar immediacy as they transition to civilian life. We are confident that if veterans can access their benefits in a more timely manner, we can train them in the new technologies in the green energy sector. We will offer them first class training and intensive support services and then send them into the private sector with industry-specific certifications, and they will succeed and thrive!

We must all give them our best efforts and have the same sense of commitment and dedication that they had when they served all of us and our country. We owe them that much.

Thank you very much for taking my testimony and for your time today.

## PREPARED STATEMENT OF JAY HAWKINS

Chairman Flores and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity today to discuss Chesapeake Energy Corporation's veterans' hiring program, which has become a remarkable success story for our company. I am Jay Hawkins, vice president of Human Resources for Chesapeake Energy Corporation.

Chesapeake is based in Oklahoma City and is the nation's second-largest producer of natural gas and the 11th largest producer of oil and natural gas liquids. We are proud to have helped lead the way in what has become known as the oil-and-gas shale revolution. This domestic supply revolution has taken place across the U.S., creating jobs, generating significant economic activity and changing our nation's energy future. This includes reducing our dependence on foreign oil and helping offer energy solutions for some of our allies around the world.

I am here today because, as a part of our success in recent years, our company is also a top employer of veterans, as well as members of the Reserve and Guard. I am honored to say these employees represent about 11% of our total employee base. This is especially significant as this hiring has occurred during a recessionary period when many tens of thousands of veterans were returning home seeking employment. Of note, the average annual salary of these veterans at Chesapeake is \$61,500.

Our efforts to recruit military servicemen and servicewomen began in 2008. But what originally started as a small component of our recruiting efforts quickly grew into an organic success.

Our targeted recruiting outreach has resulted in the current employment of about 1,200 veterans or members of the Guard or Reserve in positions ranging from rig hands to engineers. In fact, of the nearly 3,000 employees hired by Chesapeake in 2013, about 200 were members of the Guard or Reserve and about 230 were veterans.

Initially, Chesapeake recruited only junior military officers, lieutenants and captains retiring from service for specialized positions. But we quickly expanded efforts to include hiring former enlisted personnel to work in the field, realizing these men and women could be a natural fit. For instance, many maintenance and electronic technicians were trained in the military, and we are able to naturally transition their experience to the oil-and-gas industry.

Our specific recruitment efforts include participation in veterans recruiting fairs—Chesapeake attended about 50 in 2013—and a veterans-only e-mail address where military candidates can contact our recruiters directly. In total, fifteen percent of our 2013 recruiting budget was dedicated to recruiting veterans.

The result of the continued success of our program is that today we plan to add military veterans in locations across the country, including Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas, Pennsylvania and Louisiana in positions like field engineers, Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) representatives, pumpers, equipment operators, business analysts and rig hands.

Once hired, Chesapeake works hard to help our veteran employees during their transition. In 2011, we created "CHK Troop Connect", an online community where employees with military affiliation and their families can connect and support each other as they transition to civilian life and begin new careers. "CHK Troop Connect" offers Guard/Reserve/veteran employees and employees with military family members opportunities to connect with each other, plan activities and share stories. This group hosts networking events, community-service projects, welcome-home and farewell gatherings and other military-focused activities. We understand this support and continued transition assistance is vital.

Moreover, just this month, we were pleased to announce a new Military Differential Pay Benefit for all full-time Chesapeake employees who have completed at least one year of employment and are called to active duty or military training for 30 or more days. Under this benefit, our company will pay the difference between an eligible employee's Chesapeake salary and his/her military pay as a lump sum amount upon return to work.

While we know that veterans have an unmatched work ethic, commitment to team work and leadership skills, we now directly benefit from these skills and contributions on a daily basis. As our CEO said to our employees on Veterans' Day 2013—when senior management and supervisors also presented each service member with a commemorative coin in individual ceremonies—"these individuals provide strength, stability and commitment to our company, in addition to the diverse skills and expertise that are essential to our success."

Mr. Chairman, you have certainly seen the economic and job-creation results firsthand in your home state of Texas; and as a number of members of this subcommittee have seen in your own states, the timing of the growth of our industry

has made this particularly great news. Unlike most industries, the oil-and-gas industry has experienced growth during a recessionary period, and the outlook for jobs only looks brighter in the future.

We are proud that Chesapeake has been honored by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce as one of the top 25 American companies to hire veterans and named a *CivilianJobs.com*'s Most Valuable Employer for Military, as well as a G.I. Jobs Top 100 Military Friendly Employer® for five consecutive years. We were also a finalist for the Post-9/11 Veteran Employment and Internship Award and a member of First Lady Michelle Obama's Joining Forces Initiative.

In summary, our veterans' hiring efforts have truly proven to be a "win-win" for our company and for the many men and women of our armed forces who have now found exciting and rewarding new careers with Chesapeake. We are proud that this program provides a solution for our needs, as well as our returning veterans' employment needs—all while continuing to advance what has become one of our nation's greatest stories, the oil-and-gas shale revolution.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to be here with you today. I look forward to answering any questions.

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PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARK SZABO

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Takano, Members of the Subcommittee, good afternoon. I am Mark Szabo, Team Lead for the Military Recruiting Program at Baker Hughes Incorporated. As someone who spent 16 years in service with the U.S. Army Reserve, I feel extraordinarily privileged to have made a career out of attracting our veterans to the energy sector. I thank you for the great honor of appearing before you today.

Baker Hughes is a leading supplier of oilfield services, products, systems and technology to the worldwide oil, natural gas and geothermal industries. While we work in nearly 80 countries, approximately half of our more than 58,000 employees are based here in the United States, where we conduct the majority of our manufacturing, field services, and research and development.

It is here in the United States that advanced exploration and production technologies have perhaps had their most dramatic effect in increasing oil and natural gas supplies. This growth brings tremendous job opportunities at a time when a large number of servicemen and women are leaving the military.

My mission, and that of the entire Baker Hughes Military Recruiting Team, is to bring the immense talents and work ethic of our men and women in uniform to bear on energy production. This makes good business sense to us, but, in the words of our CEO Martin Craighead, welcoming our veterans home to meaningful, well-paid jobs is simply "the right thing to do."

Baker Hughes has long sought veterans for our field work, where the value of their experience is easily apparent. Mechanical assembly, field operations, machining, repair and maintenance and logistical coordination all fit within this category. However, we seek out veteran applicants at all levels of the company, including in corporate and enterprise positions, because we believe military service fosters core values that align very well with the Baker Hughes core values of integrity, teamwork, performance excellence, learning and courage.

Almost all of the members of my team are veterans themselves, and we bring that experience to bear on our approach to recruiting. We have developed a multi-pronged approach to ensure that we are reaching veterans at every stage of the transition to the private sector. We reach out to current servicemen and women at military installations throughout the U.S., and to veterans by participating in military-specific job fairs. We also partner with several universities with high veteran populations, as well as state veteran workforce commissions. We encourage veterans who are already members of the Baker Hughes community to refer their former colleagues.

In 2013 we conducted a total of 60 military recruiting events, with that face-to-face contact translating directly into 175 hires, with many more hires coming through traffic driven to our recruiting website. Our intention is to more than double that number in 2014. I am pleased to report that so far we are on that pace: we held 23 military recruiting events in the first quarter of 2014, hiring an additional 145 veterans. We are essentially hiring a veteran a day.

We believe it is important to continue that engagement beyond the hiring process, to maintain it as a consistent thread in our employees' experience. To that end, we have established a Veterans Resource Group to support veterans transitioning to Baker Hughes from active duty and connect them with each other and with mentors

within the company, creating a vibrant network for continuing professional and personal development. This program has been enormously popular since its launch in 2013—17 local chapters have already been established in Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Pennsylvania and many more are underway in places like California, Colorado and North Dakota. It will come as no surprise to the Subcommittee that these chapters, once formed, turn their focus almost instantly to making a difference in the lives of other veterans.

Baker Hughes also believes strongly in supporting those employees who continue to serve our country in the military reserves. We have policies in place to ensure our National Guard and Reserve employees are aware of and receive their benefits, and as our employees are called up Baker Hughes pays the difference between their base salary with us and their military base pay, from 30 days annually for training up to 180 day for an involuntary call to active duty. Baker Hughes was recently recognized with an ESGR Pro Patria Award in New Mexico, and I am proud to say that the company is a finalist for the 2014 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award. Like our Veterans Resource Group, this is a good program made great through the dedication and spirit of our employees.

We applaud the Subcommittee for shining a light on the opportunities available to veterans in the energy industry, and we are pleased to do our part. I look forward to the discussion. Thank you.<sup>21</sup>

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PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOHN SIMON

Good afternoon, I am John Simon, Senior Vice President of Human Resources for Pacific Gas & Electric Company. Chairman Flores, Ranking Member Takano and the other esteemed members of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, thank you very much for allowing me to participate in today's hearing and share my company's and our industry's perspective of veteran hiring in the energy industry.

PG&E is one of the largest combined natural gas and electric utilities in the United States. Headquartered in San Francisco, with more than 20,000 employees, the company provides natural gas and electric service to approximately 15 million people—or 1 in 20 Americans—throughout a 70,000-square-mile service area in northern and central California. In line with PG&E's commitment to workforce development and training, and in partnership with the Center for Energy Workforce Development's (CEWD) Troops to Energy Jobs program, PG&E has been a leader in providing job training to military veterans who want to work in the utility industry. In 2013, PG&E hired 225 veterans, most of whom we trained through our PowerPathway™ program.

I am testifying today on behalf of CEWD, which was formed in March 2006. CEWD is a non-profit consortium of electric, natural gas and nuclear utilities and their associations—the Edison Electric Institute (EEI), American Gas Association, Nuclear Energy Institute and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. CEWD was formed to help utilities identify and develop effective solutions to address the pending workforce shortages facing the utility industry. It is the first partnership between utilities, their associations, contractors, and unions to focus on the need to build a skilled workforce pipeline that will meet future industry needs.

RESPONSE TO DECLINING UTILITY WORKFORCE

In 2013, CEWD projected that as many as 200,000 electric and natural gas utility workers, an estimated 40 percent of all utility employees, could leave their jobs in the next five years as they reach retirement age or depart due to attrition. This means that, in the near-term, the country will need thousands of engineers, technicians, lineworkers, plant operators, and pipefitters for jobs in traditional energy industries, as well as jobs associated with the advancement and deployment of new technologies and innovations, including smart grid, advanced end use energy efficiency, and electric vehicles.

At the same time our nation's utility companies are looking to fill vacancies today and into the future, veterans are returning from active duty and having trouble finding employment. Many are unable to identify a clear pathway toward employment, despite having acquired very desirable and needed skills during their military service. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, approximately 190,000 to 200,000 active-duty personnel will separate from the military annually over the next quarter of a century.

The need for a quality, high-skilled energy workforce, coupled with a pipeline of qualified veterans looking for employment, creates a "win-win" opportunity for our industry. Tapping into the pool of ready and able veterans leaving military service

will play a crucial role in helping the utility industry build the workforce of tomorrow.

#### TROOPS TO ENERGY JOBS

There is no better way to honor our nation's returning veterans than to provide them with the support they need to successfully transition to civilian life. Troops to Energy Jobs, an initiative by CEWD in partnership with EEI and six pilot utility companies, including PG&E, helps connect our veterans to rewarding careers in the energy sector. The pilot program began in 2010 under the visionary leadership of Dominion Chairman, President and CEO Thomas F. Farrell II, who was then chairman of EEI. As one of the pilot companies of Troops to Energy Jobs, PG&E is extremely proud of how the program has progressed and helped to establish a needed and natural employment pipeline between the military and the nation's energy sector.

The nation's electric and natural gas utilities have long been leaders in hiring military veterans. In fact, 11 of the 100 companies honored as top military friendly employers by GI Jobs Magazine are utilities, including PG&E.

While the utility industry has an enviable track record in military recruiting and has long been considered a military-friendly employer, previous efforts had been scattered and uncoordinated. The goal of the Troops to Energy Jobs pilot program was to develop an effective national model for connecting veterans to rewarding energy careers in a systematic, coordinated, best-practices manner available to all utilities to use.

The return on investment is strong for companies since military veterans have the training and skills that directly correlate to the skills required for technical, engineering, and support positions in energy companies. Veterans are adept in critical assessment, problem solving, and thinking on their feet and outside of the box. They are a natural fit for the energy industry in important areas such as safety, leadership, and understanding the importance of following established processes and procedures.

Energy companies need employees who are committed to serving customers and their communities. With their strong sense of pride, honor, duty, discipline, focus on safety, and leadership excellence, veterans fit the industry's culture and add significant value to companies' success. A strong workforce is critical to meeting our nation's future energy needs and for supporting economic growth. For example, over the next decade, the utility industry plans to invest nearly \$2 trillion to enhance the resiliency and reliability of the nation's electric system, as well as integrate new clean energy technologies and comply with new environmental and reliability standards and regulations. This massive investment translates into the need for thousands of highly skilled workers and provides an opportunity for qualified candidates to secure long-term careers in the utility industry.

In 2013, Troops to Energy Jobs moved from the pilot phase to the point where a National Template was developed and launched. This Template can be used by the entire industry for military outreach, education, recruiting, and retention. The National Template offers veterans a road map with step-by-step guidance on how to transfer their military training to new energy careers.

Troops to Energy Jobs also includes a website, [www.troopstoenergyjobs.org](http://www.troopstoenergyjobs.org), that provides detailed information and resources to veterans who are considering a career with the electric and natural gas utility industry. The website includes an on-line roadmap, with step-by-step instruction on how to match their military skills to energy jobs, as well as information on how to continue their education to obtain required credentials or degrees. The real time job site also includes daily updates of job openings for CEWD members and access to a virtual career coach. Most recently, the website has been updated to include a registration section where veterans can register their job interest, military skills, and ultimate location once they leave the military. That information is matched with utility employers in each state to give veterans advance notice of jobs and opportunities.

Once on the job, mentors with prior military experience and industry tenure help veterans transition into the company and continues to work with them throughout their careers. The National Template also allows companies to tailor their own Troops to Energy Jobs initiative to match individual company needs and goals and to ensure that veterans do not hit roadblocks as they on-board into the company.

By recruiting and hiring veterans, energy companies create opportunities for talented individuals who otherwise may not have entered our industry. We are providing veterans a pathway, helping them to reach their full potential in a rewarding energy career.

Troops to Energy Jobs has a promising future, as the program continues to provide dedicated, well-trained, and highly disciplined servicemen and servicewomen a

pathway toward stable, well-paying jobs in the private sector that closely fit their military skills.

#### PG&E POWERPATHWAY™ Program

With more than 40 percent of PG&E's workforce eligible for retirement in the near future, our company created its veteran-hiring program called PowerPathway™. This innovative program is building a skilled workforce to deliver the high quality of service our customers expect. By partnering with educational and workforce investment systems, labor, and industry employers, PG&E is cultivating and preparing veterans for high-demand positions at our company and throughout the electric utility industry.

Over the course of the program's five years, more than 250 veterans have graduated from PowerPathway™, with 100 graduates in 2013 alone. Since 2010, veterans have comprised seven percent of PG&E's hires.

One such veteran who benefitted from the PowerPathway™ program is Erick Varela. Mr. Varela served as a non-commissioned Army officer in Iraq, but when he returned home in 2008 he struggled to find a steady job, which left him and his family homeless for about a year. Mr. Varela's life took a turn for the better when he learned about PG&E's PowerPathway™ program.

Mr. Varela applied to the program, was accepted, and, upon graduation, was hired as an apprentice electrician. In January, he had the honor of introducing President Obama at a White House event on long-term unemployment, where he also spoke about his experiences and the industry's efforts to connect military veterans to rewarding energy careers. Mr. Varela's journey is a testament to the results that can be achieved as a result of the industry's workforce development and veteran-hiring initiatives.

PowerPathway™ creates programs and partnerships to train and produce skilled and diverse workers needed by PG&E and the energy industry. The program also enlarges the talent pool of qualified, diverse candidates for skilled craft and utility industry jobs through training partnership programs with educational, community-based, and government organizations.

Recognized by the National Commission on Energy Policy as a best practice program, by Clean Edge's Clean Tech Job Trends as an organization to watch, and through a partnership with the White House and Skills for America's Future Initiative, PG&E's PowerPathway™ program is a distinguished leader in workforce development.

#### ADDITIONAL VETERAN WORKFORCE INITIATIVES

Continuing its commitment to veterans, PG&E also established a Veterans Employee Resource Group (ERG) in 2011. The ERG's goal is to educate, support and develop PG&E employees with military experience. In two years, more than 700 employees have joined the group, which is open to all employees, regardless of veteran status. The use of employee resource groups is an example of one of the best practices documented in the Troops to Energy Jobs initiative.

PG&E also is proud of its involvement in the Nuclear Uniform Curriculum Program, an industry initiative that established a partnership with 38 community colleges to educate the next generation of nuclear workers to a high and consistent standard.

In August 2012, the civilian nuclear energy industry and the U.S. Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program signed the first formal agreement between the two parties, which aims to bring personnel leaving the Navy to work in the nuclear field. More than 30 companies have signed the contract, which gives nuclear-trained naval employees the opportunity to have their contact information provided to industry recruiters. With this agreement, the Navy has the ability to recruit program graduates to serve as nuclear-trained sailors.

Because of PG&E's efforts to recruit, train, and hire veterans, our company has been designated as a 2014 Top-100 Military Friendly Employer® by Victory Media, publisher of G.I. Jobs Magazine. This is the second consecutive year, and the third time overall, that the utility has been recognized by the publication. PG&E was one of more than 5,000 companies that competed for the honor.

#### Conclusion

Over the next several years, the electric and natural gas industries will need to hire hundreds of thousands of workers. We recognize there is a strong correlation between the skill sets the power sector needs and those that veterans possess. PG&E and the electric power industry are committed to training veterans for energy industry careers through programs such as Troops to Energy Jobs, PowerPathway™ and other initiatives. We appreciate the opportunity to testify about these programs to the Subcommittee.

## STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD

Dr. William Doe, Chief Executive Officer, Veterans Green Jobs

## INTRODUCTION

Chairman Bill Flores, Ranking Member Mark Takano and Distinguished Members of the House Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with a written statement on behalf of my organization, Veterans Green Jobs, on the important topic of “Exploring Jobs for Veterans in the Energy Sector”. I am a retired career Army officer and a graduate of West Point and serve as the Chief Executive Officer of Veterans Green Jobs, a 501(c) 3 non-profit corporation, located in Denver, Colorado. Over the past decade, I have been actively involved with employment and educational issues for our military veterans, particularly those in the post-9/11 combat era, in higher education at Colorado State University and in the non-profit sector.

## VETERANS GREEN JOBS ORGANIZATION

Veterans Green Jobs was founded in 2008. Our mission is to engage, transition, and connect military veterans with meaningful employment opportunities that serve our communities and environment. We work to inspire hope and confidence in our veterans for a positive future for themselves, their families and their communities. Our vision is to empower veterans to utilize their military service to become leaders in a new mission that helps our nation achieve energy efficiency, energy independence and security, natural resources conservation and the resulting environmental, social and economic benefits. We have focused our efforts on programs that offer veterans concrete skill building and job placement in a variety of green careers. We view unemployment as a risk multiplier for all other obstacles a veteran faces. The lack of a stable career, which provides a veteran with a sense of purpose, compounds problems with health care, personal relationships, and other issues, and acts as a road block to successful reintegration into our communities.

## VETERANS GREEN JOBS PROGRAMS IN RESIDENTIAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Our efforts over the past five years have been to assist transitioning veterans with securing meaningful employment in the green sectors of our economy, include residential energy efficiency and renewable energy, the latter with an emphasis on the solar industry. We have also been successful in placing hundreds of veterans into outdoor conservation and wild land firefighting positions through partnerships with regional and state-level Conservation Corps and federal land management agencies. Within the energy sector, Veterans Green Jobs has undertaken two major programmatic efforts: (1) Employing veterans to perform residential energy efficiency services in weatherization for local communities, and (2) providing networking and job placement services for interested veterans with businesses and corporations in the renewable energy industry.

For the past five years, through contracts with the Colorado Energy Office, and under the Department of Energy’s Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), we have served the citizens of two metropolitan counties in Colorado with low-income, residential weatherization services. Our own full-time workforce, which has varied in size from 100 to 40 full-time employees over the past five years, has included a 30% veteran component, including veterans from all eras. In our current workforce of forty full-time employees, we employ six veterans in positions as weatherization technicians, three veterans as furnace technicians, and four veterans in management and support positions. Our veterans represent all branches of the Armed Forces and numerous military occupational specialties, both technical and combat arms. On-the-job training is provided and certifications in building science and performance must be achieved in the first year. Furnace technicians require more specialized certifications and licensing.

One of our current veteran weatherization technicians, Matt Rynders, a former Army combat veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, served as a Black Hawk helicopter door gunner, and was featured in a cover story in the Denver Business Journal (When the tour of duty ends, DBJ, November 8–13, 2013). Matt is typical of many of our veterans who want a steady-job with a purpose. Matt has developed a greater awareness about energy and energy use in recent years—and enjoys spreading his enthusiasm. He remembers 95-degree summer days 15 years ago and now considers 105 degrees the norm. “I see the planet changing. If we can get more people interested in doing things like increasing our efficiencies and getting educated, we can change. It’s one more brick on the foundation of creating a green environment.” Before coming to Veterans Green Jobs, Matt looked for ways to apply his sensibilities about the environment in his line of work and study. He considered working in the wind energy industry, and studied it for a while, but decided to focus



his time on working at Veterans Green Jobs weatherizing homes, where he continues to learn and explore new ways of becoming more energy efficient—not only for the benefit of clients, but for himself as well. “I never thought about why I should insulate walls and attics, or how building science works—like how buildings breathe and whether they are vented properly,” he says, adding that many homeowners likely don’t think about these things, either, but now they will.

The energy efficiency sector, both residential and commercial, presents a variety of job and career opportunities for veterans, combining their technical, communication and social skills. In addition to entry level technical positions, more advanced jobs as building energy raters and energy auditors are available. Generally, these jobs will require veterans to achieve industry certifications through community or for-profit colleges and other training institutions.

#### GROWING INTEREST OF VETERANS IN THE RENEWABLE ENERGY SECTOR

Our veterans, who have served our nation in both peace and war, understand the importance of sustaining our economy, environment and society through energy efficiency practices and the growth of clean and renewable energy. Whether it be through education or training, we have found that veterans are seeking opportunities that are more than just a good-paying job, but that will allow them to continue to serve their communities, use their technical, teamwork and cultural skills, and make a difference in the future of the nation—addressing urgent national and local issues such as energy security, environmental stewardship and community development.

They highly value the natural resources and natural environment that help define our way of life. They have seen first-hand, in deployments abroad, how the degradation of environmental quality impacts society. They also understand the operational advantages of using alternative energy in combat theaters, and have witnessed the significant investments being made by the Department of Defense to develop renewables for energy use on military installations and in other operational contexts. Thus, there is a strong connection between their military experiences with energy use and the applications that transfer to the job market and civilian sector.

Interest amongst veterans for employment in the renewable energy sector is growing. This interest is evidenced in a recent report (February 2014) entitled *Veterans in Solar: Securing America’s Future*, co-published by the Solar Foundation and Operation Free, a clean energy campaign of the Truman National Security Project and Center for National Policy, both located in Washington, D.C. The report, cited in an article published on GreenBiz (<http://www.greenbiz.com>, 2014-04-08), entitled “Why are so many veterans serving in the solar industry?” reports the growing number of veterans being employed in the solar industry. Veterans compose 9.2 percent of the 143,000-member workforce, compared to 7.6 percent of the workforce nationwide. Additionally, as cited in both of these references, veterans are taking a leadership role in the industry serving in key management, business and financial positions as the industry grows. Non-profit organizations in solar, such as GRID Alternatives and Solar Energy International, both with offices in Colorado, have partnered with Veterans Green Jobs to promote solar installation training opportunities for veterans. Finally, a number of two-year technical schools have emerged to provide education and training in the renewable energy sector, attracting significant enrollments from student-veterans. For example, one of our educational partners, Ecotech Institute in Denver, a for-profit institution providing 2-year technical programs in renewable energy, has seen its student-veteran population increase to 28% of enrolled students in only three years, and anticipates further growth in its student-veteran population.

Success in placing veterans in energy jobs requires partnerships with a variety of organizations. At Veterans Green Jobs we have partnered, in both the veterans and energy space, with numerous government agencies, corporations, non-profit organizations, and institutions of higher learning, to promote job opportunities for veterans in the energy efficiency and renewable energy sectors. In Colorado, for example, we have worked closely with the Colorado Employer Support for Guard and Reserve (ESGR), a Department of Defense organization, to both employ Guard and Reserve members, as well as participate in their Military and Veterans Employment Expo, held annually in Colorado Springs—a city with several large military installations. These highly successful employment events, attended by over 1,000 military and veteran members, provide both training for veterans on how to transition and prepare themselves for the job market, in concert with a traditional job fair with companies committed to hiring veterans. All of our programs represent “boots on the ground” for putting veterans back to work.

#### ACTIONS NECESSARY TO ENCOURAGE AND PLACE VETERANS IN THE ENERGY SECTOR

Despite the positive trends in jobs for veterans in the energy efficiency/renewable energy sectors, there are several actions that should be taken to further develop these opportunities and ensure growth of jobs in the energy efficiency and renewable energy industries for veterans:

1. Energy corporations must take the lead in formally stating their commitment to hire veterans. Large corporations committed to energy services and renewable energy, such as General Electric, Siemens and Xcel Energy, have been strong advocates for veteran friendly hiring commitments and practices. For example, Xcel Energy recently (May 14, 2014 in Denver, CO) held a major event with the ESGR to sign a Statement of Support pledge in support of National Guard and Reservist employees and to promote the hiring of Guard/Reserve members and veterans. However, many other companies in these industries have lagged behind in making commitments and investments in veterans, not only to hire them, but to ensure a supportive institutional culture once they are on board. Best practices from these leaders in the industry should be identified and distributed widely.

2. Outreach to veterans from the energy industry is essential as they transition from the military. Corporations and businesses in the energy efficiency and renewable energy sectors must more fully engage the non-profit sector and the higher education sector through partnerships and philanthropic support to promote veterans outreach, job and career counseling and placement opportunities for veterans in these industries. In addition to government employment programs for veterans, non-profits and educational institutions engage large numbers of transitioning service members and can provide networking and career guidance for individual veterans into these industries. Transitioning veterans are often unaware of the growing opportunities in these sectors.

3. Government contracting procedures for energy efficiency and renewable energy services, at both the State and Federal levels, must strongly consider the veterans workforce in making decisions about contract awards in energy efficiency and renewable energy services contracts. Large investments in renewable energy are being made by the Department of Defense on military installations. For example, the Army's Energy Initiatives Task Force (EITF) has announced a \$7B, 30-year Multiple Award Task Order Contract (MATOC) to install and operate large renewable/alternative energy projects on military installations. One hundred renewable energy companies have been pre-qualified to compete for these contracts. Energy companies with a demonstrated commitment to a veterans' workforce should be given additional consideration for these contract awards on military installations. Similarly, other government contracts, such as those in residential energy efficiency for low-income communities, should give preference to organizations who have established successful veterans' hiring programs.

In executing our programs over the past six years we have learned a great deal about the employment challenges facing veterans. There are numerous organizations and public offices in the space of veterans' employment. In our experiences, the programs with the greatest successes in employing veterans have incorporated the following elements:

- Full spectrum employment assistance with defined linkages from training and education to direct job placement
- A sense of service and organizational culture that transforms their military service into other forms of national and community service
- A living wage or stipend for internships or training that allows veterans to support themselves and their families with some income while earning certifications and training to prepare them for civilian employment
- Well communicated employment/job resources that are easy to locate and access
- Personal guidance and mentorship that helps individual veterans find training and careers based on their experience and interests

#### **Conclusion**

Chairman Flores, Veterans Green Jobs is a nonprofit corporation serving the employment needs and interests of veterans in the growing energy efficiency and renewable energy sectors. We are fully aware of the challenges facing our veterans as they exit military service and return to our communities. Our Board of Directors and non-profit staff are composed of professionals, both veteran and non-veteran, who strongly believe the energy sector provides tremendous job opportunities for our veterans. We believe that public-private-nonprofit partnerships are essential to fulfilling these opportunities. This concludes my written statement.

*Statement of Disclosure*

Veterans Green Jobs, a 501(c) 3 organization, received the following contract awards through the Colorado Energy Office (CEO) in FY12–13 and FY13–14. Funds were appropriated for this grant from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) under the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) for Low-Income Persons, CFR Part 440, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. Veterans Green Jobs was a sub-grantee for this program in Region 9 of Colorado, serving Denver and Jefferson Counties. The following contracts were awarded: FY12–13: \$2,389,559; FY13–14: \$3,344,221.

*Curriculum Vitae*

Dr. William (Bill) Doe is currently the Chief Executive Officer of Veterans Green Jobs, a 501(c) 3 non-profit corporation, located in Denver, Colorado. Dr. Doe is a career Army veteran having served on active duty in the Army Corps of Engineers for 22 years and retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel. He was commissioned from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and served on the faculty there as an Academy Professor of Geography and Environment. He holds graduate degrees in Civil Engineering from the University of New Hampshire (M.S.) and Colorado State University (Ph.D.). Upon completion of his active duty service, Dr. Doe was a senior environmental researcher, associate professor and administrator at Colorado State University where he directed environmental management contracts, services and applied research on military installations in the U.S. and Germany. His areas of expertise include military lands management, environmental and watershed management, renewable energy and the study of warfare ecology and military geography. He has authored numerous book chapters and articles on these subjects, and teaches both resident and on-line courses in sustainability for several institutions of higher learning. He is active in veterans and student-veterans affairs in Colorado.

