



March 22, 2017

The Honorable Steve Cohen
United States House of Representatives
2404 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

On behalf of the Association of the United States Navy, we would like to pledge our support for H.R. 856, the Putting Our Veterans Back to Work Act of 2017. This bill would help reduce veteran unemployment and train our nation's heroes for good-paying, high-demand jobs.

This bill would reauthorize the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP), which helps train unemployed veterans for careers in high-demand occupations, through 2020. VRAP expired in March 2014. This legislation also directs the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Attorney General to award grants to hire veterans as firefighters and law enforcement officers.

VRAP was created by the *VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011* to help unemployed veterans access educational training programs that could lead to high-demand occupations including management, business and financial operations, protective service, healthcare, transportation, and many others. While the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) approved more than 126,000 applications from veterans seeking to enter the program, only 76,000 were enrolled before the program's authorization expired last year. VRAP offered up to 12 months of training assistance to unemployed Veterans who:

- Were at least 35 but no more than 60 years old
- Were unemployed on the date of application
- Received an other than dishonorable discharge
- Were not eligible for any other VA education benefit program
- Were not in receipt of VA compensation due to un-employability
- Were not enrolled in a federal or state job-training program.

Thank you for taking an active role in such an important issue to the Military and Veteran community by working to improve the lives and careers of those who served our great nation.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns at 703-548-5800 or at michael.little@ausn.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Joseph Little". To the right of the signature, there are two lines of text: "ABH²(AW/Sea)" and "USNR".

Michael J. Little
Director of Legislative Affairs