

## Transition

### **VFW's Concerns:**

The period of moving from active duty to civilian life can be challenging for transitioning service members (TSMs). Leaving a structured life in the military and moving to an entirely different atmosphere brings with it many difficulties. Finding a new job, moving away from base, going to school, or leaving friends and comrades are just some of the issues service members face during the military to civilian transition.

Through the Transition Assistance Program (TAP), the Department of Defense (DOD) in cooperation with the Department of Labor, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Small Business Administration, ensures service members have a seamless path to civilian life. TAP has improved drastically over the past few years, but there are still many ways to further improve this vital program.

The *John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019* revised the structure of the TAP program to make sure TSMs could attend the career track program they want, instead of providing it as an additional option. The start date for beginning TAP class was also revised so TSMs could take the class earlier, and, if possible, more than once before separation.

Connecting TSMs to resources in the communities where they are relocating is an important step that should happen during TAP classes. Providing connections to organizations that offer employment training, education information, and financial or legal assistance is beneficial in a seamless transition, and must be part of the TAP class so TSMs can begin to make these connections before they separate.

Another key area that needs to be addressed is the ability for veterans to access TAP-style information and resources after they leave military service. Reopening a pilot program to offer TAP in the community for veterans is an excellent way to provide such access. Once veterans reintegrate into their communities, it is important for them to be able to access specific transition resources that apply strictly to their local communities. Veterans who participated in TAP in the community pilot program were able to access information and resources they may have missed during their initial TAP classes.

### **The VFW urges Congress to:**

- Reopen TAP in the community programs for veterans.
- Provide grants for private organizations that specialize in transition to employment as they are much more familiar with the job markets and their expertise is vital.
- Open pathways for veterans to connect with community and veteran organizations in their hometowns while still on active duty.
- Conduct oversight to ensure that DOD is adhering to the timetables prescribed by law.