

Transition

The VFW's Concerns:

The period of moving from active duty to civilian life can be challenging for transitioning service members. Leaving a structured life in the military and moving to an entirely different environment brings with it many difficulties, such as finding a new job, moving away from base, going to school, or leaving friends and comrades.

The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) is the Department of Defense's (DOD) program in cooperation with the Department of Labor, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and the Small Business Administration to ensure a seamless path for service members to civilian life. TAP has improved drastically over the past few years, but there are still many changes that are needed, such as service members attending TAP early and often.

Another key area that must be addressed is the ability for veterans to access TAP-style information and resources after they leave military service. The VFW-supported *Hire More Heroes Act of 2010* required VA and DOD to pilot a TAP option off base for veterans who were recently discharged from military service. Once veterans reintegrate into their communities, it is important for them to have access to transition resources that apply to their local communities. Veterans who participated in the pilot program were able to access information and resources they may have missed during their initial TAP classes. Reopening the pilot program to offer TAP in the community for veterans is an excellent way to address this issue.

Taking TAP class earlier with the option to attend again, if possible, is the best way to ensure service members are properly set up for success when transitioning back to civilian life. DOD must ensure service members have easy access to transition assistance materials and resources, and encourage unit leadership to give service members the opportunity to attend additional sessions of TAP.

The VFW's Solution:

The Senate must pass H.R. 2326, *Navy SEAL Chief Petty Officer William "Bill" Mulder (Ret.) Transition Improvement Act of 2019*, which was passed by the House on May 22, 2019, and would:

- 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.