

Resolution No. 408

ENSURE DOD COMPLIANCE WITH TAP MANDATE

WHEREAS, Congress has mandated Transition Assistance Program (TAP) pre-separation counseling for all service members in order to ease the difficult transition from service into civilian life by offering job-search assistance, advice on available educational and healthcare programs, and other earned benefits; and

WHEREAS, a recent GAO report indicated the Department of Defense (DOD) reporting on TAP performance did not account for 48 percent of National Guard and Reserve members and 12 percent of active duty servicemembers, significantly reducing the actual percentage of force participation from the publicly reported 94 percent to as low as 47 percent; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense has implemented a new TAP curriculum for separating service members, but does not require them to participate in classroom instruction for the individual tracks for Career Vocational Training, Accessing Higher Education, or Entrepreneurship; and

WHEREAS, recent VFW survey data shows that over half of all veterans who receive assistance through our Benefits Delivery at Discharge program reported that they did not have an opportunity to participate in any of the voluntary transition tracks; and

WHEREAS, former Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel issued guidance to installation commanders to accommodate nationally-accredited Veterans' Service Organizations to provide pre-separation services to transitioning service members, but local transition program staff do not consistently afford VSOs with the opportunity to actively engage service members during scheduled TAP classes; and

WHEREAS, Department of Defense has worked with its partner agencies to make TAP resources available in public-facing environments; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Department of Defense to include the additional curriculum tracks in its mandatory pre-separation classroom counseling, and to ensure nationally-accredited Veterans' Service Organizations are afforded consistent access to transitioning service members; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we request Congress to require DOD and its partner agencies to periodically update their TAP information and procedures to maintain program relevancy, and to expand access to TAP resources for veterans after separating from the military.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS