

## NATIONAL VETERANS EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION COMMISSION

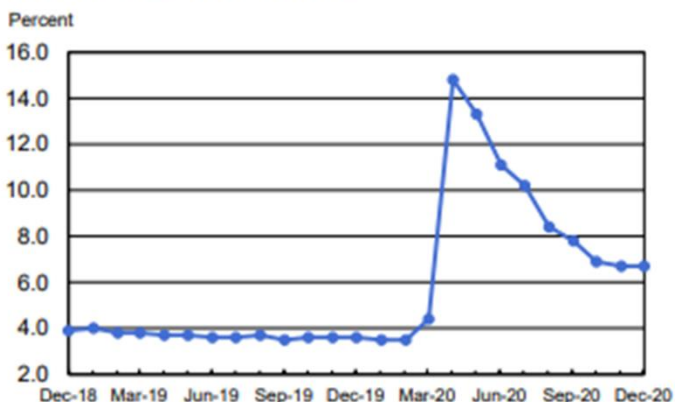
### TOPIC 1: ECONOMY

Recent employment reports have noted an ongoing, pandemic-driven “she-cession,” marked by a drastic increase in women's unemployment in 2020.

However, Syracuse University’s [Institute for Veterans and Military Families new employment report](#) shows something different when it comes to the unemployment rate of female veterans. IVMF found that female veterans experienced an overall decrease in unemployment to 3.7% in December, compared to a 6.2% unemployment rate for female non-veterans.

“From month to month, there may be fluctuations in the data so it’s important to not take any one month as a standalone,” said IVMF Director of Applied Research and Analytics Rosy Maury. “The data should be looked at from month to month, over the past few months, and certainly within the past year so that we can be monitoring the trends and situation.”

**Chart 1. Unemployment rate, seasonally adjusted, December 2018 – December 2020**



The data from the employment report comes from research done by the Bureau of Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The latest report was released on Jan. 8 and represents data from December 2020.

“At the Institute for Veterans and Military Families, we analyze the data released by BLS each month and report the unemployment numbers for veterans by various demographics for the population aged 18 and over,” Maury explained.

Women working in leisure and hospitality were more likely to experience a job loss, compared to those in retail trade and construction, according to Maury. The data suggests that female veterans have an advantage in terms of skilling and reskilling, training and career flexibility.

Other highlights from the report included:

#### **For veterans**

Unemployment decreased to 5.3% in December. Post-9/11 veteran unemployment decreased from 6.9% to 5.1% in December. Of the total 462,000 unemployed veterans ages 18 and over, 21% have been unemployed for less than five weeks and 79% have been unemployed for more than five weeks.

The average length of unemployment is 28.3 weeks (the median is 19.5 weeks). The overall unemployment trend varies by different veteran demographic factors, however, some more than others.

With respect to age, the youngest post-9/11 veterans’ (ages 18-24) unemployment rate decreased from 15.1 % to 9.4% in December. Post-9/11 veterans’ ages 25 to 34 decreased from 9.4% to 6.3%

in December. Both these groups were unemployed at a lower rate than their nonveteran peers of the same age group.

Female post-9/11 veterans experienced a decrease in unemployment, from 5.7% to 5% in December and total male veteran unemployment saw a monthly decrease from 6.4 % to 5.

The post-9/11 male veteran unemployment rate also decreased from 7.1% to 5.1% in December. Black post-9/11 veterans saw a monthly decrease in unemployment to 6.4% lower than the 9.5% unemployment rate of their nonveteran counterparts.

Hispanic post-9/11 veterans experienced a monthly decrease in unemployment to 7.8%. This rate is lower than the 9.2% unemployment rate of their nonveteran counterparts.

Maury cautioned that data on specific veteran subgroups can vary widely from month to month. “It’s also important to look at the entire year because as mentioned earlier there are fluctuations from month to month,” she said.

In 2020, the largest spike in unemployment was around the beginning of the pandemic and since then there have been gradual declines in unemployment but the rates are not where they were pre-pandemic, explained Maury.

“Even though there have been decreases in unemployment in the past few months, it is important to continue to keep monitoring the trends,” she said.

*[Reported by John Kamin]*

<b>HOUSEHOLD</b>		<b>DATA</b>				
<b>Table A-5. Employment status of the civilian population 18 years and over by veteran status, period of service, and sex, not seasonally adjusted</b>						
[Numbers in thousands]						
Employment status, veteran status, and period of service	Total		Men		Women	
	Dec 2019	Dec 2020	Dec 2019	Dec 2020	Dec 2019	Dec 2020
Unemployed	264	462	242	420	22	42
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>3.7</b>

*The national unemployment rate is 6.7 percent (Dec 2020). Gulf War II veterans' unemployment rate is 5.2 percent. Currently, the unemployment rate for Gulf War II women veterans is 5 percent.*

## **TOPIC 2: CONFERENCE CALLS**

*On Monday, January 25*, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division had conversations with SAAs in the Pilot RBS program as well as conversations with Program Manager Woodall.

*On Monday, January 25*, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with George W. Bush Institute to discuss Veterans Education and broader audience for stakeholders and thought leaders.

*On Tuesday, January 26*, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division had a meeting with HVAC minority staff to discuss priorities for the 117th Congress in the area of veterans education. Those priorities include the digital GI Bill and a bill to institute stronger approval requirements.

*On Tuesday, January 26*, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division move toward parity for BAH for online learning. Research on Isakson Roe Act.

*On Tuesday, January 26*, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division had a conversation with Esmeralda Silva, CCME President to discuss national panel on veteran's education and training next week. Panel will be virtual and will provide information to new staffers and members in Congress to allow them to serve Veterans. Director Sharpe and I are panelists.

*On Tuesday, January 26*, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division held a call with Veterans Education Success and Student Veterans of America to discuss plans for an education symposium. The initial concept would be to bring together academic and VSO stakeholders to discuss education priorities for the new administration.

*On Wednesday, January 27*, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division had a conversation with NASAA leadership (President and Vice President) on legislative priorities and plans for virtual NASAA DC conference next month.

*On Wednesday, January 27*, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division had a call with VA and NASAA/EducationCounsel team on the RBS Rollout. Discussion of needed data, remote Risk Based Surveys, and how to compile data for national database.

*On Wednesday, January 27*, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division had discussions on how to evaluate institutions and report that information to VA. VA leadership (Deputy Director Rhulman and team) remain enthusiastic about the new oversight model. Meeting with Project Manager Woodall on plans for pilot implementation.

*On Wednesday, January 27*, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with SVAC Majority Staffer Simon Coon. Simon looks forward to working together with us on our educational priorities, including 90/10, meaningful oversight and protecting veterans.

*On Wednesday, January 27*, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division established SECVA Denis McDonough Confirmation Hearing before the SVAC. Mr. McDonough was introduced by Senator Klovachar. In his testimony, McDonough referred to his strongest qualification being that he was a fighter, and he was relentless. He also highlighted his knowledge of how government works in DC and said he plans to use the knowledge on behalf of veterans. His

two questions that will guide his every decision: 1) Does the decision increase veteran access? And 2) Does the decision improve Veteran outcomes?

*On Thursday, January 28*, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division discussed with NASAA and Lumina leadership on RBS project and how to roll out nationally. Next phase will see us roll this out to DOC and begin discussions with Dept of ED on how the model could be adopted by these agencies.

*On Thursday, January 28*, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division had Conversations with VES on problem schools in GA and LA and need for the SAAs to take action. FU with SAA directors in GA and LA to discuss action against bad actors.

*On Thursday, January 28*, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division worked on GWB Institute policy recommendations.

*On Friday, January 29*, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with NASAA/EducationCounsel/Lumina on RBS project rollout this month. Also, discussed with HVAC staffers and congressional.

*On Friday, January 29*, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with GWB working group for final presentation of recommendations. Also, had discussions with VSOs and staffers for DC trip next week.

*On Friday, January 29*, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division spoke on a policy panel at the National Association of State Approving Agencies mid-winter meeting. VE&E staff discussed recent updates to approving procedures and recently signed legislation.

## **GLOSSARY OF FREQUENTLY USED ABBREVIATIONS**

ACE: American Council on Education

ACP: American Corporate Partners, a veterans support organization

ATLAS: Accessing Telehealth through Local Area Stations, a V.A. telehealth initiative

BLS: Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics

C&P: V.A.'s Compensation and Pension exam

CAVC: Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims

COLA: Cost-of-living adjustment

CSAAVE: California State Approving Agency for Veterans Education

DIMO: Defense Security Cooperation Agency/Defense Institute for Medical Operations

DOD: Department of Defense

DOL-VETS: Department of Labor, Veterans Employment and Training Services

EdCounsel: Higher education consulting firm

EIDL program. SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loans

EIDL: Economic Injury Disaster Loan

GAO: Government Accountability Office

GPD: V.A.'s Grant and Per Diem Program for homeless veterans

GWB: George W. Bush Higher Education Policy Work Group

HEROES ACT of 2003: Higher Education Relief Opportunities for Students Act of 2003. Grants the Secretary of Education the authority to waive requirements that impede military borrowers' access to critical repayment protection during the war, military operation, or national emergency.

HVAC: House Veterans Affairs Committee

MCAI: American Legion's Military Credentialing Advancement Initiative  
MSLP: The Federal Reserve's Main Street Lending Program  
MSO: Military Support Organization  
NAICU: National Association of Independent Colleges & Universities  
NASAA: National Association of State Approving Agencies. Responsible for approving school funding for GI Bill  
NAVPA: National Association of Veterans Program Administrators  
NCA: V.A.'s National Cemetery Administration  
NDAA: National Defense Authorization Act  
NLD: American Legion's National Legislative Division  
OPM: Office of Personnel Management  
PPP: Paycheck Protection Program  
RBS: Risk-Based Survey Model  
RPIC: Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge  
S2S: Service to School, a veterans organization  
SAA: State Approving Agency, responsible for approving school funding for GI Bill  
SBA: Small Business Administration  
STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, Medical  
SVA: Student Veterans of America, a veterans organization  
SVAC Senate Veterans Affairs Committee  
TAPS: Transition Assistance Program for Survivors, a nonprofit for Gold Star Families  
TEAM Act: Senate Bill 4393, to improve the provision of health care for veterans who were exposed to toxic substances from burn pits  
TFA: American Legion's Temporary Financial Assistance program  
USAID: United States Agency for International Development  
USDA: United States Department of Agriculture  
USERRA: Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act  
VA&R: American Legion's Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division  
VACO: Veterans Affairs Central Office  
VBA: V.A.'s Veterans Benefits Administration  
VE&E: Veterans Employment and Education Division  
VES: Veterans Education Success, a veterans organization  
VSO: Veterans Service Organization

### TOPIC 3a: TRACKING LEGISLATION

**GI Bill Repair Act of 2020:** To extend to black veterans of World War II, their surviving spouses, and direct descendants eligibility for specific housing and educational assistance programs administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs

(Tracked by [John Kamin](#))

[Resolution No.:](#) [None on file](#)

**Status:** Currently on hold, has not been introduced

**Homeless Veteran Coronavirus Response Act:** The bill allows V.A. to use existing funds for a broader range of services; authorizes the Department to collaborate with outside organizations to facilitate shelters on its properties; loosens restrictions on Grant and Per Diem (GPD) payments, and requires V.A. to ensure veterans participating in V.A. homeless programs have access to V.A. telehealth services.

(Tracked by [Teresa Lewis](#))

[Resolution No. 326: Support Funding for Additional Housing for Homeless Veterans with Families](#)

**HR 6800, the Heroes Act:** Allows VA to provide transport and purchase food, shelter, phones, clothing, blankets, and toiletry items for homeless veterans; Authorizes VA to set up temporary encampments on the grounds of V.A. Medical Centers to allow homeless veterans to shelter on V.A. parking lots temporarily; Allows VA to provide reimbursements to social service providers receiving grants for the costs of services for minor children.

(Tracked by Davy Leghorn)

[Resolution No. 324: Support Funding for Homeless Veterans](#)

**HR 1615:** The American Legion supports legislation that would streamline and improve the verification process for veteran-owned small businesses and veteran-owned small businesses.

(Tracked by Davy Leghorn)

[Resolution No. 155: Support Verification Improvements for Veterans' Business](#)

**Status: Passed at the 2016 National Convention.**

**HR 2224:** To direct the Secretary of Labor to prioritize services to homeless veterans with dependent children in carrying out homeless veterans' reintegration programs and for other purposes.

(Tracked by Ariel De Jesus/John Kamin)

[Resolution No. 326: Support Funding for Additional Housing for Homeless Veterans with Families](#)

**HR 1196, Jobs for Veterans Act of 2019:** This bill allows an increased work opportunity tax credit for employers who hire veterans who have been certified as discharged or released from active duty in the Armed Forces after September 11, 2001, and who begin working for the employer after December 31, 2019, and before January 1, 2024. This increased credit is in addition to any work opportunity tax credit allowed to a veteran with a service-connected disability.

(Tracked by Ariel De Jesus/John Kamin)

[Resolution No. 354: Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program](#)

**HR 7010, Paycheck Protection Program Flexibility Act of 2020:** This bill significantly changes the PPP loans' terms to be more advantageous to small businesses. Including more flexibility in applying the loan to other expenses besides payroll and benefits and extending the time frame for expending the loan.

(Tracked by Davy Leghorn)

**HR 4625:** To require education programs to be approved by the V.A. to abide by the Principles of Excellence to include a ban on deceptive or misleading recruiting, clear information about total costs and program requirements, accommodation for deployments, ensuring a point of contact for veterans, and not being under a punitive action by an accreditor.

(Tracked by John Kamin)

[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality of Servicemember and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#)

**HR 6957:** To direct the Secretaries of Defense and Veterans Affairs to treat a period of full-time National Guard duty, performed in response to the national emergency declared on March 13, 2020, by the President concerning COVID-19, as not shorter than 90 days.

(Tracked by John Kamin)

[Resolution No.: Currently studying for appropriate resolution.](#)

**HR 4920 Department of Veterans Affairs Contracting Preference Consistency Act of 2020:** is a bill that would allow AbilityOne companies to keep their preferential treatment at the Department of Veteran Affairs after 2016 with some compromises. The Senate initially sent it back to the House after it was passed for changes. Those changes have been reconciled, and the bill cleared its last hurdle before it is sent to the White House.

**S. 2594:** To amend title 5, United States Code, to modify specific requirements concerning service and retirement for veterans' Preference for federal hiring.

(Tracked by Ariel De Jesus)

[Resolution No. 317: Enforcing Veterans' Preference Hiring Practices in Federal Civil Service](#)

**S. 3745, Coronavirus Emergency Borrower Defense (E-BD) Act:** to require the Department of Education to grant full student loan discharges to three specific emergency categories of defrauded borrowers—specifically borrowers covered by:

- (1) Department of Education findings against Corinthian.
- (2) Department of Education findings against ITT Tech; and
- (3) State attorneys general group discharge applications made before the date of enactment.

(Tracked by John Kamin)

[Resolution No. 82: Preserve Veteran and Servicemember Rights to Gainful Employment and Borrower Defense Protections](#)

### TOPIC 3b: ACTION TAKEN ON LEGISLATION

**Building Credit Access for Veterans Act:** A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to establish an automated process for obtaining alternative credit rating information and other purposes.

(Tracked by Ariel)

**Status: Draft Bill / Letter of Support submitted on October 13**

**HR 8426: Protecting Apprenticeship Training for Veterans Act:** Currently, veterans must meet a minimum number of apprenticeship hours to receive their Housing Allowance. Due to pandemic work shortages, veterans in those programs now face a reduction or suspension in their stipend. This would allow veteran apprentices who were laid off to roll over excess hours from a previous month to meet the hourly requirement.

(Tracked by John Kamin)

[Resolution: Resolution No. 25: Support and Expand Apprenticeship Opportunities for Servicemembers](#)

**Status: Letter of Support drafted**

**HR 4941: Veteran Employment Transition Act” or the “VET Act”** was sponsored by Representative Andy Kim. The bill's last action was in the House on 12/02/2019; it was referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity. The bill's goal is to improve the Transition Assistance Program. The bill would allow certain veterans' service organizations to contact veterans regarding benefits and better inform veterans of employment opportunities. The Service groups would inform veterans of the benefits and employment opportunities with the Federal, State, and local governments. The groups inform veterans of events in the area.

(Tracked by Ariel De Jesus)

[Resolution No. 70: Improve Transition Assistance Program](#)

**Status: Letter of Support submitted**

**HR 7003:** is a bill sponsored by Rep. Takano, Mark D-CA-41, and was introduced 05/22/2020. The bill would authorize a pilot program in the Department of Defense to enhance efforts to provide job placement assistance and related employment services directly to the National Guard, Reserves, and veterans of the Armed Forces. The last action on the bill was 05/22/2020 and referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

(Tracked by Ariel/Raymond)

[Resolution No. 81: Transition Assistance Program Employment Workshops for National Guard and Reserve Members](#)

**Status: Pending Letter of Support**

**Draft Bill:** Veterans Educational Assistance Transparency and Accountability Improvement Act, improve the G.I. Bill Comparison Tool ensures veterans, servicemembers, and their families are better informed when choosing what educational institution is best for them.

[Resolution No. 327: Support Further Assessment and Evaluation of Institutions of Higher Learning to Enable Veterans to Make Informed Education Choices](#)

**Status: Letter of Support submitted**

**Draft Bill:** JSF - To amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the scope of procedural rights of members of the uniformed services concerning their employment and reemployment rights, and for other purposes.

(Tracked by Davy Leghorn)

**Status: We submitted written testimony for the July 23, 2020 hearing.**

**Draft Bill:** USERRA Protections for State Active Duty - To amend title 38, United States Code, extend particular employment and reemployment rights to members of the National Guard who perform State active duty. Submitted written testimony to the Legislative Division.

(Tracked by Ariel De Jesus)

[Resolution No. 315: Support Employment and Reemployment Rights of National Guard and Reservists Returning from Deployment](#)

**Status: We submitted written testimony for the July 23, 2020 hearing.**

**HR 7111: Veterans Economic Recovery Act of 2020:** Require the Secretary of V.A. to carry out a rapid retraining program that provides eligible veterans up to 12 months of retraining assistance for in-demand occupations. These 12 months of benefits would be equivalent to students' and schools' payments through the Post 9/11 GI Bill.

(Tracked by John Kamin)

[Resolution No. 316: Support Employment of Veterans in the Public and Private Workforce](#)

**Status: This bill was submitted for the July 23, 2020 testimony.**

**HR 7445:** To expand eligibility for home loans from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to individual members of the Armed Forces reserve components.

[Resolution No. 329: Support Home Loan Guaranty Program](#)

**Status: This bill was submitted for the July 23, 2020 testimony.**

## TOPIC 5: CAREER FAIRS

ALL IN-PERSON CAREER FAIRS SCHEDULED THROUGH DECEMBER HAVE BEEN CANCELLED, SUSPENDED, OR POSTPONED.





THE AMERICAN LEGION  
DEPARTMENT of TEXAS  
**VIRTUAL CAREER FAIR**

Employment Opportunities are Waiting for You. Register Now and Connect  
with Local and Nationwide Employers Looking to Hire.

Tuesday, February 9, 2021 ★ 10:00am-2:00pm (Central Time)



Job Seeker Registration

Employer Registration

**The American Legion is working on future virtual workshops and career fairs.**

Newly discharged veterans claiming benefits totaled 9,143, a decrease of 2,011 from the prior week.

*The Mission of The American Legion's National Veterans Employment & Education Commission is to take actions that affect veterans' economic well-being, including issues relating to veterans' education, employment, home loans, vocational rehabilitation, homelessness, and small business.*

*[Reported by Ariel De Jesus]*

## TOPIC 7: EDUCATION

To learn more about COVID-19's impact on Veterans' education trends, the VA recently leveraged social media technology to better understand GI Bill stakeholders' needs and priorities. Analyzing social media data is an emerging method that allows us to explore more than what a traditional survey could show, and it helps us collect actionable insight from an even larger audience.

After looking at 100,000+ posts from 70,000+ authors on public facing digital and social media platforms, VA categorized the data into four main topic areas: health and safety, education and job training, employment and job market, and financial.

While data show an increase in health and safety concerns (91% citing COVID-19 as a main concern), the main focus of online conversation (62%) was on future-proofing careers and using the GI Bill to gain a competitive advantage in the job market.



Additionally, the following trends were identified:

- Many Veterans are considering launching a career in, or re-skilling in, the advanced technology field. Data show 86% of GI Bill beneficiary conversations are about re-skilling and preparing for future jobs.
- Many cite using the GI Bill as a vehicle for opening doors to job opportunities – with little to no student loans.
- Veterans are actively seeking ways to remain competitive in today's job market, especially during COVID-19. Data show a 60% increase in conversations that cite unemployment as a reason to use the GI Bill.
- Many conversations credit the GI Bill with helping rebuild the country and seeding the U.S. economy with higher skilled workers. For example, there are nearly 1,200 [Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses \(VET TEC\) program](#) graduates today starting their careers in advanced technology with job titles including software engineer, technology consultant, cyber security analyst, data scientist and full-stack developer.

Further data is available through the [GI Bill Sentiment Analysis Infographic](#) to learn more about some of the most pressing issues for GI Bill students. VA's recently updated [COVID-19 FAQs](#) include lessons learned from this analysis, and The American Legion supports applying this data to inform future communications and programs.

*[Reported by John Kamin]*

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**Week Ending: 1/29/2021**