

U.S. Rep. Van Orden: Statement on passage of Veterans Readiness and Employment Improvement Act

Posted on Monday, Feb 2, 2026

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, the House passed Congressman Derrick Van Orden’s Veterans Readiness and Employment Improvement Act of 2025, that strengthens support for veterans transitioning from military service to civilian life.

“As a retired Navy SEAL, taking care of veterans isn’t a policy issue for me, it’s personal. The VR&E program should open doors, not create obstacles.” Van Orden Said. “This legislation puts more counselors where they’re needed, launches a dedicated hotline for immediate support, and expands education benefits so veterans can step confidently into their next chapter. Our veterans shouldn’t fight the system; the system should fight for them.”

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) operates the Veterans Readiness and Employment (VR&E) program to help veterans pursue education, employment, independent living, or entrepreneurship. Last year, more than 180,000 veterans participated. Veterans had to wait up to seven months to complete the VR&E Program intake and processing. Counselors, who previously were required to hold a master’s degree in a relevant field, were often overburdened, particularly in VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC) positions, limiting support for veterans transitioning to college life.

Previously, there was no dedicated VR&E hotline, and wait times could stretch up to seven months. Veterans seeking enrollment in non-degree flight training programs could not use VR&E funds, even though GI Bill benefits allow similar programs.

Key Improvements:

- Establishes a dedicated VR&E hotline and requires each VA regional office to list VR&E contact information online.
- Expands rehabilitation programs to include non-degree flight training programs.
- Streamlines education benefits, reducing administrative barriers and expanding opportunities for veterans.
- Eliminates the master's degree requirement for VSOC counselors to improve hiring and retention.