

News Release

For Immediate Release

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Arizona Represented in U.S. House of Representatives Hearing on Veteran Employment During COVID-19 Era

May 26 Hearing Features Arizona Coalition for Military Families Director Thomas Winkel

Phoenix, Ariz. (May 28, 2021) – The support given to service members, veterans and their families by the Arizona Coalition for Military Families (ACMF) and its partners in the public and private sector was featured at a May 26 hearing by the U.S. House of Representatives Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity.

Chairman Mike Levin opened the hearing with an overview of the great strides that were being made to reduce veteran unemployment before the pandemic struck. With the goal of getting as many resources as possible to veterans and their families to ease the difficulties presented by the effects of COVID-19, Chairman Levin invited testimony by the panel members after remarks by Ranking Member Barry Moore.

Arizona Coalition for Military Families' Director Thomas Winkel provided the Subcommittee members with an overview of ACMF's efforts to address the unique challenges faced by the veteran workforce in today's labor market. One of the areas that ACMF's Be Connected Career Navigation program addresses is helping veterans translate the experience and abilities they gained through military service into the skills sought after by civilian employers.

"Our effort focuses on matching candidates to employers for the best possible outcomes, while addressing issues and barriers that might prevent career placement or progression. And because this effort works hand in hand with Arizona's workforce system we eliminate conflicts of interest and reduce the prevalence of underemployment by focusing on both quality and quantity of placements."

The ACMF's approach to supporting veteran employment and underemployment involves a collaborative approach that draws in public and private partners from across the state.

"Our partnership includes our Governor's Office and the Office of Youth, Faith & Family, U.S. Department of Labor, Arizona Department of Veterans' Services, Arizona Commerce Authority, Office of Economic Opportunity, Department of Economic Security, ARIZONA@WORK, our active duty, guard and reserve units, Chamber of Commerce, Veteran Supportive Campuses, and many more," said Winkel. "On the employer side, our Arizona Corporate Council on Veteran Careers is a Network of Veteran Supportive Employers who share how they strengthen their recruiting, hiring and retention of military-connected career seekers."

Joining Director Winkel on the panel were:

- Chris Thorne, Co-Chair, Military Affairs Advisory Council, North San Diego Business Chamber
- Jeremy Villanueva, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans
- Eric Eversole, President, Hiring our Heroes, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

For more information on the programs and employment services offered to Arizona service members, veterans and their families through the Arizona Coalition for Military Families' Be Connected program, visit www.ConnectVeterans.org or call 866-4AZ-VETS (866-429-8387). View a replay of the hearing at <http://bit.ly/0526Video> and find the witness list, testimony and panel exhibits at <http://bit.ly/0526Testimony>.

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About the Arizona Coalition for Military Families

The mission of the Arizona Coalition for Military Families is to connect the 500,000+ military members, veterans and their families in Arizona to the right resources at the right time through the [Be Connected](#) program. The Coalition is [recognized as a national leader](#) for its ability to bring together Arizona's public and private sector partners in a unified effort. Launched in 2009, the Coalition works nationally and locally to advocate for service members, veterans and their families. The Coalition works collaboratively to build and sustain an [Ecosystem of Support](#) needed to sustain Arizona's statewide capacity to care for, serve and support service members, veterans and their families. The Coalition's membership extends across all levels of local, county, state and federal government as well as a vast network of private companies, healthcare providers, faith-based organizations, higher education institutions and non-profit partners. To learn more about the Arizona Coalition for Military Families, visit www.ArizonaCoalition.org.

About the Be Connected® Program

[Be Connected](#) is the program of the Arizona Coalition for Military Families that links Arizona service members, veterans, families and community helpers to information, support and resources for employment, healthcare, wellness benefits and more. Be Connected includes a support line, a resource matching website, a statewide team of community-based navigators and no-cost training. Launched with the help, support and guidance of the late Senator John McCain, and now operated with support from the Governor's Office, the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and other partners, Be Connected is available to any member of the military, any veteran and their family members regardless of era or length of service, discharge status or disability status. Anyone who served or anyone supporting those who served can call 866-4AZ-VETS (866-429-8387) for support. Organizations that want to support and join our efforts should begin by [completing an application](#). For more information, to find support and learn more, visit www.ConnectVeterans.org.