

ICE Digest

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The Troop Talent Act of 2013

By Jeffrey H. Greenwald, P.E., CAE

The Troop Talent Act (S.700/H.R. 1796) is federal legislation that aims to ease the transition of service members from active duty to the civilian workforce. The bill would improve the alignment of specialty skills acquired in the military with civilian credentials or licenses required for employment following service. The Troop Talent Act will match veterans' skills with growth industries.

The Troop Talent Act is especially important for the future of America's veterans. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported on May 3, 2013, that the unemployment rate for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans was 7.5 percent, mirroring the national unemployment rate for the first time in years. Upon returning home from service, veterans are often burdened with challenges not experienced by civilians, especially finding their place in the professional workforce. The Troop Talent Act would provide information to service members throughout their career in the military to match their experience to civilian credentials. The legislation would establish strict standards for programs that guarantee a credential, in order to prevent credential fraud. Additionally, the Troop Talent Act would expand the current Department of Defense Pilot Program on credentialing to include information technology, so that the skills of service members would be matched to that industry. The Troop Talent Act has been introduced by Senator Tim Kaine (D-Va.) in the Senate and by Congresswoman Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.), and the bill has wide bipartisan support.

The Institute of Hazardous Materials Management (IHMM) supports the intent behind S. 700/H.R. 1796 and looks forward to monitoring the work of the House and Senate to advance the employment prospects of our veterans. In order to achieve this goal, however, military work experience needs to be better understood by all credentialing organizations such as IHMM. In the absence of such recognition, veterans may not meet credential eligibility requirements to be credentialed and, thus, may not be able to find a job in their chosen field.

For example, the Army calls their enlisted jobs MOSs, or Military Occupation Specialties. The Army has around 190 MOSs available for enlisted soldiers. Most civilian licenses and credentials have eligibility requirements that ask for experience relevant to the license or credential. These programs most likely do not have the understanding of what military experience is acceptable to meet the program's eligibility requirements. For example, IHMM offer the Certified Hazardous Materials Practitioner (CHMP) credentials and its work eligibility requirements state "... at least 5 years of relevant experience with responsibilities directly related to the handling of hazardous materials and/or waste in the workplace." The question is: What are the MOSs that pertain to hazardous material storage, movement, packaging, transport, etc.? We believe that the Troop Talent Act should require the development of a system to review civilian credential eligibility requirements so active duty and veterans know their military experience will be eligible to meet civilian credential requirements.

Accrediting organizations are well positioned to support the Troop Talent Act. Veterans need to know that the attributes of accredited credentials demonstrates to potential employer their knowledge and professionalism. Credentials that are accredited through third-party oversight from organizations such as the American National Standards Institute, the Council of Engineering and Scientific Specialty Boards (CESB), and National Commission for Certifying Agencies drive best practices of personnel. Persons holding accredited credentials, or certificants, demonstrate continued competencies through initial award of a particular credential and by continued competencies through recertification processes. Recertification of credentials drives the market to provide quality professional development activities that meet the certificant's requirement to meet each credential's professional development levels. Accredited credentials also have requirement for proactive surveillance of professionals through adherence to codes of ethics. These are just a few of the attributes associated with accredited credentials. The Troop Talent Act of 2013 needs to recognize that accredited credentials ensure that veterans are investing their time and resources to become professionals in their particular field of practice.

About IHMM

IHMM is an approved accreditation body for personnel certification under ANSI/ISO/IEC 17024, Conformity assessment — General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons. IHMM is also accredited by CESB.

- Two IHMM credentials are accredited under ANSI/ISO/IEC 17024 and CESB:
 - Certified Hazardous Materials Manager (CHMM)
 - Certified Hazardous Materials Practitioner (CHMP)

CHMMs are professionals who have demonstrated, through education, experience and examination, the ability to identify and assess the risks of hazardous materials, mitigate or eliminate those risks, and manage their impact on human health and the environment. CHMPs are professionals experienced in handling hazardous materials in a wide variety of specialties, such as environmental protection, emergency response, safety, transportation, security and cleaning up contaminated sites. Additionally, IHMM is developing the Certified Dangerous Goods Professional (CDGP) credential. CDGP will demonstrate, through experience and examination, that they have the knowledge and skills appropriate for dealing with the transportation and security of hazardous materials/dangerous goods internationally. Detailed information can be provided upon request as well as viewed at www.ihmm.org.



Jeffrey H. Greenwald, P.E., CAE, is executive director of the Institute of Hazardous Materials Management (IHMM) directing programs that provide credentials to hazardous materials management and dangerous goods transport professionals; develops strategies to expand the Institute; represents IHMM to outside agencies, organizations, professionals; fosters relationships with other organizations; and develops relationships, alliances and corporate sponsorships. Greenwald is a registered professional engineer in Virginia. He graduated from the Institute for Organizational Management with a certificate in nonprofit organization management and is a certified association executive (CAE).



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