

H.R.2760 (VARGAS) THE IMMIGRANT VETERANS ELIGIBILITY TRACKING SYSTEM (I-VETS) ACT OF 2017

POSITION: The Chamber's Defense, Veterans & Military Affairs Committee voted to SUPPORT H.R.2760 on August 2, 2017.

STATUS: H.R.2760 was introduced by Congressman Juan Vargas on May 26, 2017. It was referred to the House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security on July 12, 2017.

AT-A-GLANCE

H.R.2760 would create a tracking system to help identify active and retired non-citizen servicemembers. This bill would also direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to identify non-citizens who have served in any branch of the armed forces when applying for immigration benefits or when placed in immigration enforcement proceedings.

SUMMARY

H.R.2760 would establish a data collection system to track and identify active and retired non-citizen servicemembers for use when those non-citizens are applying for immigration benefits or when placed in immigration enforcement proceedings. This data will enable the Department of Homeland Security to "fast track," on a case-by-case basis and at the discretion of the Secretary of Homeland Security, those applying for naturalization in the United States.

ANALYSIS

The Chamber continues to be an enthusiastic supporter of the military and veteran communities in the San Diego region. H.R.2760 would support veterans by potentially "fast tracking" folks who are pursuing the naturalization process. If veterans are able to remain in San Diego, they can have a positive impact on our regional economy by adding to our local workforce. The Chamber believes that we owe it to servicemembers who have given so much to our country the opportunity to become citizens, and supporting H.R.2760 could provide a pathway to that.

The Chamber remains supportive of a legal path toward citizenship in the United States as well as comprehensive immigration reform that promotes efficient borders. Immigrants comprise nearly one-third of the labor force in San Diego County, contribute to about 25 percent of the region's GDP, and immigrant households make up 22 percent of the total household income in San Diego County, which represents a substantial share of spending power. Enhancement of our regional and national economy can be achieved through a well-trained and plentiful work force, and safe and efficient borders.