

H.R.4323 (DUNN) – SUPPORTING VETERANS IN STEM CAREERS ACT

POSITION: The Chamber’s Defense, Veterans & Military Affairs Committee voted to SUPPORT H.R.4323 on September 5, 2018. The Chamber’s Public Policy Committee voted to SUPPORT H.R.4323 on September 11, 2018.

RATIONALE: The Defense, Veterans & Military Affairs Committee voted to SUPPORT H.R.3963 because it would connect veterans to jobs, specifically in the STEM industry which is in need of a skilled workforce.

STATUS: H.R.4323 was introduced by Rep. Neal P. Dunn [R-FL-2] on November 9, 2017. The bill passed out of the House and is in the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation as of September 5, 2018.

SUMMARY

H.R.4323 seeks to encourage increased veteran involvement in STEM careers and education.

INDUSTRY/IES IMPACTED

The industries that could be directly impacted are: science, technology, engineering, research, education, and more.

SUPPORTERS

- Representatives from the following states: CA, TX, GA, KS, IN, LA, CT

OPPONENTS

None known

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR

There is a workforce shortage of qualified people in STEM careers. At the same time, service members are faced with the need to find meaningful employment when they transition to civilian life. This bill is a win-win. According to the author, “this bill ensures our government goes above and beyond to bring STEM career opportunities to our veterans.” In addition, two Members of Congress assert that this bill will help the U.S. remain competitive in research and innovation at the global level.

ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION

Establishing another bureaucracy within the federal government won’t necessarily ensure veterans participate in STEM studies and careers at higher levels.

MORE INFORMATION

H.R.4323 directs the National Science Foundation (NSF) to develop an outreach plan to encourage veterans to study and pursue careers in STEM. The bill also directs the NSF to submit a plan of action to Congress, which will include a report on NSF’s outreach activities, identify the best method for using existing programs to support veterans in STEM studies and careers, and create a method to track participation levels in NSF research and education programs.

The NSF would also be required to provide an annual report to Congress on current veteran STEM career and educational programs, requiring data collection and reporting. The bill also allows for veterans to participate in various federal scholarship programs, fellowships, and grant opportunities relating to STEM careers.

Lastly, H.R.4323 requires the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy in the White House to establish a subcommittee under the Committee on STEM Education of the National Science and Technology Council that would coordinate all participating federal agencies and generate a strategic plan to combat barriers to STEM careers for veterans.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates implementation of the bill would cost \$1 million over the 2018-2022 period. Most of these costs would be for staff time. This bill has received bipartisan support from members in both the House and Senate.