



National Association of State EMS Officials

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Sept. 14, 2009

Senator Mike Enzi
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
U.S. Senate
379A Senate Russell Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Support of “Veterans to Paramedics” Language in S. 1154 and H.R. 3200

The National Association of State Emergency Medical Services Official (NASEMSO) Executive Committee on Aug. 13, 2009, adopted a position to support efforts made in attempting to address the issue of veterans’ transition to civil life, while assisting local communities with the shortage of emergency medical technicians. NASEMSO has worked closely in the past with Senator Klobuchar in addressing this issue, and through that same concern, worked closely with Representative Harman (along with Advocates for EMS) to fully support and endorse language in H.R. 3200 establishing a program similar to that introduced in S. 1154. NASEMSO would like to offer its assistance in ensuring that the language contained in S.1154 benefits our veterans and provides State EMS offices with the ability and funding to expedite the transition of veterans.

Below is a comparison of S. 1154 and the language contained within H.R. 3200. As NASEMSO fully supports H.R. 3200, and stands ready to assist in reviewing S. 1154, the following clarifications of language are recommended:

- **Eligibility.** Currently, language does not specify whether a veteran is eligible based on discharge from military service. The State EMS Office would recommend that language clarify that “honorable” discharge be added.
- **Period of Licensure and Certification.** Currently, language does not specify the length of time between “honorable” discharge and certification/licensure. As medicine changes quickly, veterans discharged from service must be active in maintaining their skills. A length of time more than two years (without actively working in EMS as a civilian) places the veteran in a position of transition to a myriad of medical changes, scope of practice enhancements, and rules that adversely affect how emergency medical services are provided. The language would not affect, in any way, a veteran already working within the medical field after discharge.

NASEMSO recommends the following language to address the above:

“States may ‘fastrack’ a veteran into an equivalent licensure to that held by the veteran during his/her tenure with the U.S. military for a period of no more than two years after the veteran’s honorable discharge.”

Comparison of Language in S. 1154 and H.R. 3200:

S. 1154	H.R. 3200
Program	
<p>Grants for Emergency Medical Services Personnel Training for Veterans</p>	<p>The Secretary shall establish a program consisting of awarding grants to States to assist veterans who received and completed military emergency medical training while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States to become, upon their discharge or release from active duty service, State licensed or certified emergency medical technicians.</p>
Use of Funds	
<p>...as provided by the Secretary, may use funds to provide to military veterans required coursework and training that take into account, and are not duplicative of, previous medical coursework and training received when such veterans were active members of the Armed Forces, to enable such veterans to satisfy emergency medical services personnel certification requirements, as determined by the appropriate State regulatory entity.</p>	<p>Amounts received as a grant under this section may be used to assist veterans described in subsection to become State licensed or certified emergency medical technicians as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Providing training. b) Providing reimbursement for costs associated with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ training; or ▪ applying for licensure or certification. c) Expediting the licensing or certification process.
Eligibility	
<p>Does not address.</p>	<p>To be eligible for a grant, a State shall demonstrate to the Secretary's satisfaction that the State has a shortage of emergency medical technicians.</p>
Report	
<p>Does not address.</p>	<p>The Secretary shall submit to the Congress an annual report on the program.</p> <p>GAO Study and Report. The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study on the barriers experienced by veterans who received training as medical personnel while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States and, upon their discharge or release from active duty service, seek to</p>

	<p>become licensed or certified in a State as civilian health professionals; and no later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, submit to the Congress a report on the results of such study, including recommendations on whether the program established should be expanded to assist veterans seeking to become licensed or certified in a State as health providers other than emergency medical technicians.</p>
<p>Period of Licensure/Certification</p>	
<p>Does not address.</p>	<p>Does not address.</p>

Again, thank you for allowing NASESMO and Advocates for EMS to address S. 1154 and assist the Senator in developing a program that not only provides veterans a clear, concise and expedient method of transition to civilian emergency medical services licensure/certification, but also grants the States an ability to aid and support local services in addressing the demonstrated shortage in emergency medical technicians – especially in our frontier and rural areas.

Sincerely,



Robert Waller
 NASEMSO Government Affairs Chair
 Director, Kansas Board of Emergency Medical Services