

## 5/08/2008 Moran Works to Ease Path for Veterans to Become Paramedics

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Jerry Moran today introduced legislation to ease the process by which veterans with medical training can become an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) provider. Despite medical training received in the military, many states require veterans to start the certification process over to become a paramedic. The Veterans-to-Paramedics Transition Act will address the shortage of EMS personnel in rural areas and facilitate a smoother transition for servicemembers and veterans with military-based medical training to enter the civilian workforce.

"Kansas and many states are facing a severe shortage of EMS providers," Moran said. "Kansas EMS has taken the initiative and is working to address this issue. I am hopeful we can serve as a model for other states to help veterans secure employment while providing valuable health care to our communities."

Thousands of men and women in the military receive emergency medical training as part of their duties. When these veterans return to civilian life, however, their military-based medical training is not counted toward training and certification as civilian paramedics. Many existing programs require all students to begin with an entry-level curriculum. For veterans, this means spending extra time and money for training that, in effect, they have already received.

The Veterans-to-Paramedics Transition Act would expedite the certification of servicemembers and veterans with military-based medical training as professional emergency medical service personnel to serve in rural areas. The legislation will provide federal grants for universities, colleges, technical schools and State EMS agencies to develop an appropriate curriculum to train these veterans and fast-track their eligibility for paramedic certification. A standard paramedic training program can take one to two years to complete.

"EMS has and will continue to struggle with finding people to become attendants," Robert Waller, Chief Administrator for the Kansas Board of EMS, said. "Kansas has already addressed this issue by taking into account whether an individual has military training or experience in another state. This way, we are able to certify individuals through an equivalency system. This bill will allow other states to implement similar plans. Anything we can do to bring attention to the EMS shortage is important."

Moran is a member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee and a chair of the Rural Health Care Caucus. This legislation has been endorsed by the National Rural Health Association.

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