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March 22, 2016

Re: Veterans Preference Hiring and Retention

Dear Senator,

As the executive director of the Union Veterans Council, AFL-CIO (UVC), I am writing in regards to the importance of preserving and strengthening veterans' preference laws when it comes to federal employee hiring and retention. Veterans' preference not only benefits our nation's veterans who are seeking to continue their service as civilian government employees, it's also a great deal for American taxpayers.

Unfortunately, there have been efforts over the last several years to either water down, or do away with veterans' preference altogether. As a Marine veteran of the War in Iraq and on behalf of the tens of thousands of veterans who are members of the Union Veterans Council, AFL-CIO – including the thousands who are employed by the federal government – I encourage you to reject these misguided attacks on veterans' preference.

Veterans have the knowledge, life experiences, and unique training it takes to effectively serve the public in a civilian role after their military days are over. Indeed, many of the veterans who currently work for the federal government are assisting our fighting men and women at the Department of Defense (DOD), while thousands more are serving their fellow veterans at the Veterans Administration (VA). Additionally, it's the work of thousands of veterans that keep our postal service (USPS) running and our mail delivered on time.

As it stands now some agencies have unjustly attempted to circumvent veterans' preference in hiring through the intern hiring program that allowed hiring officers to bypass qualified veterans. Fortunately, that practice was successfully challenged in court by many of our affiliated unions. However, set aside jobs for veterans must be protected and expanded and federal agencies must keep better track of which positions are designated for veterans. Veterans' preference during Reductions-In-Force (RIF) situations has also been watered down through language inserted last year's Fiscal Year 2016 (FY16)





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National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Finally, legislation is needed to close a loophole in the law where VA health care employees are not able to appeal violations to their veterans' preference rights.

On behalf of the Union Veterans Council, AFL-CIO, and the working class veterans we represent, we encourage you reject all efforts to end or diminish veterans' preference.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to discussing this further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Will Fischer".

Will Fischer
Executive Director
Union Veterans Council, AFL-CIO