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House of Representatives

INVESTING IN OUR VETERANS!

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Speaker, I recently learned that the unemployment rate for veterans ages 18–24 in the U.S. is 22 percent, double the rate for civilians, and up from about 14 percent three years ago. This is unacceptable! It is because of this alarming trend that I have recently reintroduced my bill, the Let's Re-Up the Troops-to-Cops Program Act, H.R. 715.

This legislation authorizes grant funds to be used for the Troops-to-Cops Program, which provides resources to local law enforcement agencies for the hiring of recently discharged members of the Armed Forces to serve as law enforcement officers. The Troops-to-Cops program was one of several grant programs available through the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program that was authorized in 1994 under the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 and administered through the U.S. Department of Justice through 1999, when it was disbanded.

Despite an increase in job training programs, employer education efforts, and post-9/11 GI Bill improvements, unemployment for veterans is still too high. According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, the root of the problem is a lack of experience and the ability to effectively translate military skills into the civilian workforce. However, many skills acquired in the military can be transferred to civilian law enforcement and security jobs.

My bill will provide local law enforcement agencies funding to recruit, train and hire honorably discharged members of the Armed Forces to serve as career law enforcement officers. With thousands of troops set to return this year, it is essential that we are prepared to give them an opportunity to serve their communities. I urge all my colleagues to join me in reaffirming our nation's commitment to care for our service-members and veterans by supporting this bill.

Our veterans have invested in our country and this legislation invests in our veterans!