

# The Military Spouse Education and Employment Act of 2008

Senator Corker introduced bipartisan legislation with Senator Claire McCaskill to improve educational and employment opportunities for America's military spouses. The bill includes the following provisions to address these challenges:

**Work Opportunity Tax Credit** - amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make employers of spouses of active duty military personnel (and Guard and Reserve with activation orders in excess of 90 days) eligible for the work opportunity tax credit. Currently, the Work Opportunity Tax Credit provides a maximum benefit of \$2,400 per new hire.

**Doubles the value of the Work Opportunity Tax Credit** to employers who (1) employ a military spouse in a professional career, (2) pay the spouse a salary of 150 percent of the median annual earnings rate, and (3) allow the spouse to work primarily from home. Military spouses seeking professional careers often push their active duty spouse to leave service in order to enable achievement of a professional career. This provision will create a monetary incentive for employers to make more professional career opportunities available to military spouses via telecommuting.

**\*Federal Employment Preferences** – extend federal government veterans hiring preferences to the spouse population. In a case where hiring requires a test, it would provide for a five-point addition to passing examination scores (same as OIF/OEF veterans).

**\*Fully Transferable Montgomery GI Bill** – as a retention tool, allow the service member to transfer any unused portion of his/her GI Bill benefit to a spouse or child on the condition of reenlistment to a third term. Provide retroactivity to October 1, 2001. This would provide additional incentive for a third term re-enlistment, while also encouraging spouses/children to advance their education and employment opportunities.

**\*Health Care and Early Childhood Development Education Grants** – almost all active duty military bases have child care and health care facilities with civilian jobs available. Require the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy, in conjunction with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, to study the options and report the findings to Congress with recommendations for developing an education grant program that would train military spouses in the health care and early childhood development career fields – they are portable and prevalent on and around military bases.

**Study on Creating Work Opportunities for Military Spouses** – Requires a study and report to Congress on the challenges that face undergraduate and graduate level educated military spouses of active duty military personnel in securing and maintaining employment during the term of their active duty spouse's service. The study seeks to more thoroughly review obstacles to spouses seeking professional careers and would help identify innovative solutions.

*\* Denotes provisions that have already become law or were enacted through an executive order from the President of the United States as amended.*