

EMPLOYMENT ISSUES FOR VETERANS



Jack Choate, a 48 year old man, once drove a truck for the Army National Guard of Ohio while Iraq war was taking place but ended up losing his job working at a machine shop in Dayton, simply because of problems that came from him working in the military. The problem was that at the machine shop, when the presses would close on certain parts of the metal, it would sound like a tank and that would upset him, reminding him of the past and when he was serving for our country in Iraq. It would bring back flashes and scary thoughts and he would often find himself scared, stuck reminding himself that he was at work and no longer in Iraq, although it was tough. Choate is not the only veteran dealing with these types of problems. As more veterans are going back to work after returning to civilian life, the huge issue that they face now is dealing with the post-traumatic stress disorder that commonly occurs after dealing with such traumatic events such as a war. Dealing with such war conditions can cause people who have experienced it to struggle with flashbacks and serious problems because of it. About 20 percent of veterans returning back from Iraq and Afghanistan showed signs of post-traumatic stress disorder or depression, which makes it hard for these individuals to deal in a civilian setting, as anything can set off the feelings they have. It becomes a struggle for these individuals to find employment when they are suffering from PTSD or other types of mental health issues due to serving in the military and seeing things that most people never have to experience in their entire life. Employers are starting to realize that by offering support and guidance within the workplace, these problems do not have to hold the veterans back and they can, in fact, work in a normal workplace setting, as long as the support is provided to them. Choate's employers held onto him for two years but decided to let him go because of his treatment, since the treatment was taking up a lot of his time. It is believed that employers should support veterans who are dealing with PTSD by catering to them in ways that will help them work efficiently in the workplace. For example, if the workplace is noisy, they need to provide the individuals with earplugs, which is especially important for avoiding a flashback in a veteran who may think that a sound in their place of work sounds eerily familiar to the sounds of bombs or other scary noises that were once heard overseas. Unemployment is still a major problem for veterans as they return back to civilian life and struggle to find work. Those who have been on several deployments and have been active duty service members for quite a while will often tend to have the most trouble repositioning back into the civilian life that they once lived. While it is a struggle, many programs are being developed for these individuals so that they can find work. After all, they served our country and they deserve to have a job too.