

JOBS BILL DID NOT PASS BY VETERANS DAY



The Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee and its leader were worried that a veteran's employment bill would not pass by the time Veterans Day came around. They were right on the money. The committee chairwoman is Senator Patty Murray, a Democrat from Washington, knew the bill would not pass. The bill is a mix of compromises of ideas from the House of Representatives and the Senate and the White House. The vote on the bill took place last week, and if it passed, it would then go to the House, which was off until this week. Murray knew it would be impossible to pass the bill. "Our veterans were depending on us coming to a resolution by Veterans Day, as I hoped we would have as well," said Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Fla. "I would have preferred the wheels of legislation to have moved more quickly to make our original goal, but we have made a lot of progress." One of the reasons that there has been a delay is the fact that the Senate has not decided on whether or not they should add an initiative from the White House. The initiative would give tax credits to employers who hire veterans and disabled veterans. This initiative comes from the American Jobs Act created by President Obama. Many Republicans in Congress have been reluctant to pass any employment package created by Obama. This does not mean the tax credit is controversial. Instead, lawmakers feel that inclusion of an Obama initiative will not prevent the passage of the bill. "This is an issue that should not be partisan," said Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont. Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich said the following, "No veteran should stand in the back of any line, let alone an unemployment line." The expansion of job training and transition programs is other areas of the initiative. The bill will be known as the Vow to Hire Heroes Act of 2011, which is a combination of the House's Veterans Opportunity to Work Act (VOW Act) and the Senate's Hiring Heroes Act. Veterans who are 35 and older would be able to receive one year of education benefits if they have exhausted their veterans' education and training benefits but have not had a job for a long time. The benefits would be used to train the veteran in a new skilled for the workforce. Paul Rieckhoff, founder and executive director of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America released the following statement about the bill: "We applaud the Senate for making veteran employment a top priority. If this legislation is the first jobs bill to pass out of Congress this year, it will show that our community is a top priority in Washington for all." Rieckhoff said that there were 240,000 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans unemployed as of October of 2011.

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