



For Immediate Release
July 20, 2020

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Blinded Veterans Laud Bipartisan House Approval of Key Veteran Employment Legislation

(Alexandria, Virginia) The Blinded Veterans Association (BVA) today praised the bipartisan effort to pass by unanimous consent H.R. 4920, “The VA Contracting Preference Consistency Act,” legislation that will significantly enhance the lives of America’s blinded veterans for years to come. The bill has already passed the full Senate and moves to the White House for Presidential signature.

“Employment of our blinded veterans has been an area of major concern to BVA for many years and this issue has now been addressed by passage of H.R. 4920,” said BVA Executive Director Donald Overton. “We express our sincere thanks for the support for this bill in both the House and the Senate, and especially to House Committee on Veterans Affairs Chairman Mark Takano (D-CA-41) and Committee Ranking Member Phil Roe, M.D. (R-TN-1).

H.R. 4920 addresses the unemployment rate of blinded veterans by ensuring that companies and nonprofit organizations that employ blinded veterans and other disabled veterans receive contracting preferences from VA. The result will be improved job security for thousands of blind and severely disabled veterans in important positions of responsibility and greater potential profitability for organizations seeking VA contracts.

The legislation preserves the AbilityOne Contracting Program with respect to products and services VA was purchasing before the Veterans First Program was created in 2006. The Veterans First Program will apply to all other products and service. Without passage of the bill meaningful employment opportunities for blind and other disabled veterans would have remained in jeopardy. At the time the bill was introduced, expiring VA contracts with AbilityOne companies threatened the jobs of approximately 2,800 individuals who are blind or severely disabled in 30 states.

The Blinded Veterans Association is the only congressionally chartered Veterans Service Organization serving veterans with vision loss. The organization promotes opportunities for individual blinded veterans and their service providers to view and try out the latest adaptive technology and tools. The organization has successfully advocated for their needs since World War II. For more information about BVA and its services, call toll-free 800-669-7079 or visit bva.org.