

INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE ON  
VETERANS SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

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U.S. Small Business Administration  
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## TASK FORCE MEMBERS:

Marie Johns, Chair  
Deputy Administrator  
Small Business Administration

Rhett Jeppson  
Assoc Administrator for Veterans Business Development  
Small Business Administration

James Wilfong  
Veterans Entrepreneurship Task Force (VET-Force)

Tom Leney  
Executive Director for Small and Veteran Business  
Programs

Jiyoung Park  
Associate Administrator  
Office of Small Business Utilization  
Small Business Administration

Andre Gudger  
Department of Defense

Matthew Blum  
Office of Management and Budget

Maria E. Temiquel  
Department of Labor

Donald Graves, Jr.  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
U.S. Department of Treasury

Earl Peek  
U.S. Department of Treasury

## 1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 (9:07 a.m.)

3 CHAIRMAN JOHNS: Good morning, everyone, and  
4 welcome to our Interagency Task Force on Veterans Small  
5 Business Development. I'm Marie Johns. I have the  
6 honor of chairing this august group, and want to  
7 welcome everybody for being here today. A number of my  
8 colleagues are in the audience, so I appreciate you  
9 being here. We'll be hearing from some of them later.

10 We have a very full agenda, and this is such  
11 important work that we do in terms of ensuring that our  
12 federal partners are working -- that we're all working  
13 together as closely as we can to ensure that we're  
14 providing the optimal support for our veterans, that  
15 our veterans have the best possible support to do what  
16 they often do very well, and that is start great  
17 businesses and cause businesses to row and create jobs.

18 So our priority today, among others, is to  
19 make sure that we've got a good process in place for  
20 our next report. As we all know, the first report of  
21 this task force was sent to President Obama last fall,  
22 and we are at the point in time in our year where we

1 need to set our sights on having another strong report  
2 ready for the President.

3           So I want to highlight a few things this  
4 morning. And first of all, I want to talk about some  
5 recent travel. I was in Las Vegas about a week and a  
6 half ago for an urban economic forum. And Anie Borja  
7 is here, who's a senior advisor in our office of field  
8 operations and has been instrumental in the design and  
9 execution of our urban economic forums.

10           And at that particular one, we hosted a  
11 veterans roundtable, which was quite a good opportunity  
12 for us at the SBA to hear directly from veteran  
13 business owners what are some of the issues that they  
14 are facing, and ways that we can support them more  
15 effectively. But it was a very good conversation.

16           And then earlier this week, the administrator  
17 Karen Mills and I, along with several of our other  
18 colleagues, met at the White House with -- well,  
19 Matthew was there, and Jiyoung, a number of us around  
20 the table -- to talk about small business procurement  
21 across the federal agencies.

22           We are looking very carefully at the numbers,

1 and the purpose of that meeting was to make sure that  
2 we're sharing best practices, that the SBA is hearing  
3 directly what more support we can provide to agencies  
4 so that we can really make the very best effort to  
5 reach the government's goal of 23 percent procurement  
6 with small firms.

7           So I wanted to also talk about a couple of  
8 companies that I've had the pleasure of meeting  
9 recently. I often say that one of my favorite parts of  
10 this job is to travel around the country and meet small  
11 business owners. They are amazing people, always  
12 inspiring. And I met two veteran-owned firms recently  
13 that were particularly of interest that I wanted to  
14 share.

15           One was Dillon Brothers Concrete. Mr. Dillon  
16 is a veteran. He is an Army veteran, African American  
17 business owner in New Orleans, Louisiana. He started  
18 his company, a very small company, in the wake of  
19 Katrina in helping to rebuild the city, and since that  
20 time, he has grown.

21           He's used SBA loans. He's added several  
22 new -- he's added two new trucks. He's built a new

1 plant. He's added ten employees, and is doing very  
2 well. And he has done this with much support from the  
3 SBA. He's had two SBA loans, and he was just great to  
4 meet and to talk to. And he's also currently in the  
5 process of applying for his 8(a) certification.

6           Then I met a young man, Warren McKee, in Iowa  
7 as part of our Young Entrepreneurs Initiative, and  
8 Warren is probably about 21 years old. He started a  
9 new company, Ironclad Systems, LLC, and he's part of an  
10 incubator, a very innovative incubator, that is  
11 operating under the aegis of the economic development  
12 organization in Des Moines.

13           Warren was a military police officer in  
14 Baghdad, and so I guess he's got -- he was there for  
15 six years, so he's got to be older than 21. But he  
16 looks 21 to me. But a really great young man, and a  
17 big vision for his company, and he's off to a great  
18 start. And he's used SBA services as well.

19           So I just wanted to highlight those two  
20 companies because they were just great examples of  
21 veteran-owned businesses who are, fortunately, using  
22 SBA services and growing their businesses.

1           So I don't want to take up much more time with  
2 my introduction because I want to get to something very  
3 exciting, and that is to introduce our new colleague,  
4 Lieutenant Colonel Rhett Jeppson.

5           Rhett is the new associate administrator for  
6 our Office of Veterans Business Opportunities. Rhett  
7 comes to the SBA with a very distinguished career.  
8 U.S. Marine Corps. He's been in Germany for the past  
9 two years. And he served as the chief of joint  
10 national training capability for the U.S. European  
11 Command.

12           Rhett's been here about, what, two weeks? How  
13 long has it been?

14           MR. JEPSON: This is the end of my second  
15 week right now.

16           CHAIRMAN JOHNS: Two weeks, and he's already  
17 hit the ground running. And we're just so very happy  
18 that he's joined the SBA.

19           So with that, it's my pleasure to introduce  
20 Rhett, and he's going to give a few opening remarks.

21           MR. LENEY: He's already grown his hair out.

22           (Laughter.)

1           MR. JEPPSON: I'm glad to be here today. I  
2 just thought I might take a few minutes and just kind  
3 of introduce myself a little bit, give you a little bit  
4 of my background, where I come from, and a little bit  
5 of my perspective on how I see things and where I'm at.

6           Coming out of the University of Florida, I  
7 joined the Marine Corps. I went through the OCS  
8 program there, and was an infantry officer in the  
9 Marine Corps. Right after Desert Storm, my father, who  
10 owned a small construction business in northwest  
11 Florida, he had relapsed from acute myelogenous  
12 leukemia and was in need of a bone marrow transplant.

13           So I left active service at that time and went  
14 and ran the family business while he underwent that  
15 bone marrow transplant. And I'd like to tell you that  
16 I grew the business and was very successful, but that  
17 wouldn't be accurate.

18           I managed to keep the business afloat. I will  
19 tell you that as a young guy coming out of the service,  
20 it was difficult. I didn't know a lot. And in  
21 retrospect, and even in the two weeks I've spent here,  
22 some of the resources that are available here -- the

1 tools, the lessons learned -- if I would have had  
2 those, I would have been much more successful, you  
3 know.

4           So it was a difficult, difficult period. But  
5 we managed to keep the business afloat, managed to put  
6 my sisters through college, and turned the business  
7 back over to my father after he recovered from the bone  
8 marrow transplant.

9           I then had an opportunity to go back to  
10 Special Operations Command, which was probably the  
11 funnest job I've ever had in my life. We got to travel  
12 the world and do what we call cool guy stuff, which was  
13 really enjoyable.

14           After about four years of that as a Reserve  
15 officer, I had the opportunity to work in the State of  
16 Florida. And one of the positions I had there was  
17 director of procurement, so I learned to appreciate the  
18 difficulties of contracting with the government, of  
19 government procurement, from both sides of the fence.

20           I know that it's difficult for small  
21 businesses that have to deal with the government, the  
22 regulations and some of the difficulties we face there.

1 But also, the government procurement official, you  
2 know, he has a lot of rules and regulations that he has  
3 to meet, and I know that it's difficult for them. So a  
4 little bit of experience in that background.

5 Then, in the wake of 9/11, I got recalled to  
6 active service, where I spent time first at Marine  
7 Forces Europe, then at Special Operations Command for  
8 an extended period of time. Did a tour in Poland for a  
9 year, where I helped them stand up their special  
10 operations command.

11 Immediately after that, I did a year in  
12 Afghanistan as the Deputy Director of Operations for  
13 U.S. Forces Afghanistan. And then after that, the  
14 Marine Corps said, hey, we've got a deal for you.  
15 We'll send you to Europe for a while. So I spent the  
16 past two years working at the U.S. European Command.

17 So I have a little bit of -- I might say I'm  
18 that guy. I've been a small business, not sole owner  
19 but proprietor, and ran the family business. I've done  
20 the government procurement thing. And I've been that  
21 veteran.

22 And as a veteran coming back from active

1 service, I realize the difficulties and the hard times,  
2 because I've been there, that you go through as you go  
3 through as you go through that transition process.

4           So as we begin to focus on one of the exciting  
5 things that I think that we're focusing on right off  
6 the bat here, is we're looking at the servicemember as  
7 he transitions out of the service -- that's one of the  
8 things that the Administration's really focused on  
9 right now -- and one of the key elements of the process  
10 that they're developing is focusing on those who desire  
11 to start businesses.

12           So I'm really excited to be able to give my  
13 input and to be part of that process as we move  
14 forward. And I think that later in the meeting here,  
15 one of my colleagues, Michael Chodos, will actually  
16 speak about where we're at on the Boots to Business  
17 process. And I look forward to working closely with  
18 him on that.

19           Just a quick story. As I mentioned earlier  
20 to -- I think it was to Mr. Wilfong, that I'm still on  
21 active duty. I'm on terminal leave right now from the  
22 Marine Corps. I was just recently -- two weeks ago, I

1 flew back from Germany.

2           While I was there, I drove up to one of the  
3 bases to see my son perform in a concert. And the next  
4 morning, we went over to the PX, the military  
5 shoppette, and in there, there was this magazine. And  
6 it was for veteran entrepreneurs.

7           And I opened up the magazine and I started  
8 getting pretty excited about things. And then I looked  
9 at about halfway through the magazine, and there was a  
10 picture of Bill Elmore in there, my predecessor. And  
11 it listed this long list of accomplishments that he had  
12 in his tenure here.

13           And so I realized all of a sudden, hey, I've  
14 got really huge shoes to fill here. So there's been a  
15 lot of great work that's been done before me, and I  
16 look forward to working to building upon that good work  
17 that Bill and his team did.

18           As we go through this journey together, I look  
19 forward to working with each of you and learning from  
20 the years of experience that are in this room here in  
21 regards to veterans and building the success of their  
22 small businesses. I look forward to working with each

1 of you, and I hope to meet each of you individually in  
2 the next coming weeks and to have the opportunity to  
3 learn from you.

4 So with that, Marie, I'll turn it back thank  
5 you. Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN JOHNS: All right. Thank you, Rhett.

7 So I'm sure you can see now why we're so  
8 excited that Rhett has joined us. We're going to  
9 really be able to keep, as Rhett says, building on the  
10 good foundation that Bill and team built, and we've got  
11 a lot of exciting initiatives and important work ahead.

12 So thanks again, Rhett.

13 There has been much work done in concert with  
14 the VA and DOD, a task force that's looking at  
15 rebuilding the TAP experience. And so certainly SBA is  
16 playing a role in that. We are all partners in that  
17 effort, but Andre Gudger is here this morning to give  
18 us an update on what's going on in that critical  
19 process.

20 MR. GUDGER: Thank you, Marie.

21 DOD and the VA co-lead a task force for  
22 veteran employment. And it stood up last year after

1 the President announced a need to create a task force  
2 in August, and said, hey, we need to tackle this issue,  
3 with the sole, or primary, focus of the young men and  
4 women aged 18 to 24 returning back from the wars as the  
5 drawdown happens.

6           So Department of Defense P&R, led by Pat  
7 Tamburrino and the VA, led by Mr. Gingrich, our  
8 executive steering committee, and it's a lot of  
9 collaboration between all the agencies. Although it  
10 says DOD and VA, it's everyone at the table working  
11 through this, from the White House across the Labor,  
12 OPM. SBA's involved.

13           And Tom Leney and I, we co-lead the  
14 entrepreneurship track. There are four tracks. It  
15 started out with four tracks -- a transition track, an  
16 entrepreneurship track, an education track, and an  
17 employment track.

18           So Tom and I lead the entrepreneurship, and  
19 we're looking at how to make good recommendations. And  
20 we were so fortunate to meet a very smart man in SBA  
21 named Mike Chodos, who's here -- you're going to hear  
22 from him shortly -- so he's kind of like a third

1 co-lead.

2           We are looking at making strong  
3 recommendations. And we recently, about two weeks ago,  
4 had a very successful briefing with the Deputy  
5 Secretary of Defense, Dr. Carter, on the  
6 recommendations we'd like to put forward to the  
7 Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the VA and  
8 the White House.

9           So things are moving, and we look forward to  
10 submitting a strong package that we're all excited  
11 about. So I don't know if, Tom, you have anything you  
12 might want to add, or Mike, but --

13           MR. LENEY: If I could. I just want to  
14 showcase something that's very unusual in the  
15 government, that the DOD/VA Interagency Task Force on  
16 Veteran Employment built on the strong work of this  
17 task force; and, rather than going off in a dark room  
18 and operating independently and coming up with  
19 reinventing wheels that had already been invented, the  
20 great work done here was the foundation for the  
21 entrepreneurship portion of that task force.

22           So we're seeking to utilize the interest and

1 engagement of major agencies to really leverage what's  
2 been done already. And again, unfortunately, that's  
3 more unusual than usual.

4 MR. GUDGER: With that being said, since Tom  
5 and I and Mike are co-leading the entrepreneurship task  
6 force, we've looked at the full gamut of  
7 recommendations. We've talked to many. We've taken  
8 all ideas in. We've talked to academics. We've talked  
9 to the veteran community. We've combed the government,  
10 and I think we've put together a good, rock-solid set  
11 of recommendations.

12 And like Tom said, to echo him, it was not new  
13 work all the way. It was a lot of work that was done  
14 in this task force that was great, and it should be  
15 part of ours. This is a quantum leap in the right  
16 direction by tying the two task forces together and  
17 really having some real outcomes in the near future.

18 And with that being said, that's it.

19 CHAIRMAN JOHNS: I had one question. Did you  
20 happen to mention when the report is DOE?

21 MR. GUDGER: Well, right now, it's evolving.  
22 So we are looking to submit the recommendations to our

1 Secretaries here in the next coming few months from the  
2 task force for their approval. So there's no actual  
3 due date, hard line, right now because it's more about  
4 getting it right than getting to the finish line. I  
5 think it's been a good approach. So we're close.

6 CHAIRMAN JOHNS: Any questions from task force  
7 members?

8 (No response.)

9 CHAIRMAN JOHNS: Any questions from the  
10 public?

11 (No response.)

12 CHAIRMAN JOHNS: Okay. Thank you, Andre.  
13 Thank you, Tom.

14 Now it's my pleasure to invite my colleague,  
15 Michael Chodos, to the microphone. Michael is our  
16 associate administrator for the Office of  
17 Entrepreneurial Development. And it's fitting that  
18 Michael's report follows this update on the VA/DOD task  
19 force because Michael is leading the effort at the SBA  
20 for an initiative that we're very excited about that is  
21 related to expanded entrepreneurial development and  
22 opportunities for servicemembers.

1           So Michael?

2           MR. CHODOS: All right. Thank you, everyone,  
3 for the opportunity to come speak to you this morning.  
4 Thank you, everyone. I look forward to chatting with  
5 you. And thank you, Marie, for inviting me this  
6 morning to talk to the task force about what we have in  
7 mind.

8           Andre and Tom, I want to say a special thank  
9 you to you. What I'm here to talk about is sort of a  
10 piece that fits into the overall redo of TAP that Tom  
11 and Andre have been leading on behalf of the  
12 entrepreneurship piece. And let me just discuss a  
13 little bit what this is about.

14           Of course, one of the recommendations of this  
15 body, starting from well over a year ago, was that  
16 entrepreneurship play a stronger role in the education  
17 and support that we provide to our returning servicemen  
18 and women.

19           That was taken to heart. Andre and Tom  
20 championed that idea with the DOD/VA task force that  
21 was tasked with redoing TAP as a whole. So it wasn't  
22 just about entrepreneurship; it was the overall redo of

1 TAP.

2 But that became part of the thinking about  
3 what to do in order to provide an option for our  
4 servicemen and women so that they could have support as  
5 they started their businesses and then went on to grow  
6 them. But let me talk a little bit about what that has  
7 shown up to be like and what the challenge is.

8 As we all know, the most basic statistic that  
9 we all hear all the time is that two-thirds of all net  
10 new jobs are created by small businesses, and that over  
11 half of all of the working men and women in this  
12 country either own or work for a small business.

13 Having said that, there is still resistance at  
14 various places in the world, and including in DOD and  
15 VA, around the value of entrepreneurship training, and  
16 that shows up in various ways. Part of it is just  
17 we're in tight budget times. But part of it shows up  
18 like this.

19 These are young men and women coming out of  
20 the military, coming out of their active service, for  
21 the most part. Not all of them are young men and  
22 women, but most of them are. And there are those of

1 very good intention who say, we are worried about  
2 somebody coming in and pumping a bunch of ideas into  
3 the head of a, you know, young serviceman or woman,  
4 saying, you can go off and be the next Mark Zuckerberg,  
5 or you can go off and start the next Apple. And they  
6 aren't really ready to do that yet. And so we are  
7 worried about somebody giving them false hope and false  
8 ideas.

9           There has been a little bit of that as we've  
10 gone through this process. And let me explain what we  
11 have been telling folks.

12           Many of our returning servicemen and women are  
13 going into business regardless of whether they receive  
14 training or support from us. They are going back and  
15 taking over family businesses. As Rhett told you from  
16 his own personal experience, every day in every place  
17 around the country, young men and women are going back  
18 and starting businesses because the job market does not  
19 provide other opportunities, because their families  
20 have existing businesses.

21           In some cases they had existing businesses  
22 before they went into active service, especially at the

1 Reserve components, and they're going back to take  
2 those over. Or they are starting franchises, as we  
3 know our vets way over-index in starting franchises.  
4 Or they are going back to start small businesses of  
5 every type imaginable around the country.

6           We are committed not to having young men and  
7 women start businesses that they are not prepared to  
8 start. We are committed to having them be prepared to  
9 start those businesses that they want to start so that  
10 they can be successful, so that they can not only  
11 provide for themselves but they can provide for their  
12 families.

13           So really, at the end of the day, starting a  
14 business either happens in one of two ways. It happens  
15 when you're prepared to do it, or it happens when  
16 you're not prepared to do it. We want to make sure we  
17 do everything we can so that when they start, they are  
18 prepared.

19           Now, as most everybody in this room knows, SBA  
20 has a massive network out in the country already. It  
21 has partners in our SBDC, our Small Business  
22 Development Center, our Women's Business Center, and

1 our SCORE chapters all over the country that help small  
2 businesses start and grow throughout their life cycle,  
3 no matter where they are, no matter what type of  
4 business they're in, no matter their income level when  
5 they start, no matter their preparedness level when  
6 they start.

7           We also have partners at various colleges and  
8 universities across the country, including, for  
9 example, Syracuse with the institute for military  
10 veterans and their families, that are extremely  
11 experienced through the EBV, the Entrepreneurial Book  
12 Camp for Veterans Program, and other similar programs,  
13 including our own VYs and endure and grow programs.  
14 Very experienced at providing entrepreneurship training  
15 for young men and women who are transitioning out of  
16 military service.

17           Right now, today, all across the country, our  
18 resource partners provide entrepreneurship training in  
19 connection with TAP Programs across the country. It  
20 happens on an ad hoc basis. It happens because of  
21 connections and collaboration and coordination with  
22 local base commanders.

1           But we have all been working together to come  
2 up with a way to provide this kind of effective,  
3 meaningful, impactful entrepreneurship training to all  
4 of those who are considering entrepreneurship at a high  
5 quality level, at a reproducible level, at scale all  
6 across the country.

7           So I have here something I want to show you,  
8 which is a curriculum. I'll just sort of display it  
9 for everybody else. This is called the Operation Boots  
10 to Business curriculum from service to startup. This  
11 is an example of the materials that we're going to have  
12 available to our young men and women when we all roll  
13 this out.

14           The concept is essentially this: that a lot  
15 of these young men and women are considering  
16 entrepreneurship. We intend to expose them, first and  
17 foremost, to an invitation to learn about  
18 entrepreneurship, to actually understand what it means  
19 for them and their families.

20           We intend to tell them what the challenges,  
21 the opportunities, and the risks are of  
22 entrepreneurship. And then we need to tell them what

1 entrepreneurship planning and business planning  
2 actually means so that you can not just have an idea;  
3 you can actually have a plan about how to implement  
4 your idea, and find out if it's the right idea with the  
5 right support and the right materials and the right  
6 resources in order to make it happen.

7           So we're prepared to roll that out. We plan  
8 to roll out a pilot program for this at various places  
9 around the country to test things out and see what  
10 works best. And we are planning to be prepared to roll  
11 out across the country when the new transition GPS  
12 version of TAP is ready to go some time around  
13 September/October/November, in that time frame.

14           So I just wanted to give everybody the update,  
15 let everyone know that we have been in place working  
16 with the services, working with all of our partners,  
17 getting the materials, the people, and the program  
18 ready to go.

19           So with that, we look forward to keeping  
20 everything updated on the progress of that program.  
21 But what I really want to say most of all is, this for  
22 the SBA is part of a life cycle support for small

1 businesses. As young men and women transitioning out  
2 of the military choose entrepreneurship, we intend to  
3 tell them about what that means and to provide them  
4 with support and resources.

5           And we don't intend to drop them after  
6 transition GPS. If they start, we plan to be there  
7 with our resource partners and all of our partners in  
8 order to support them at every stage of their  
9 businesses all along the way throughout the rest of the  
10 life of that business.

11           So with that, I'll answer any questions if  
12 anyone has any.

13           CHAIRMAN JOHNS: Thank you, Michael.

14           Any questions? Donald?

15           MR. GRAVES: I guess you partially answered my  
16 question in the focus on the life cycle. But it would  
17 seem to me that a large percentage of the veterans who  
18 are starting their own small businesses, the critical  
19 piece for them is not just the beginning, before they  
20 launch their business or take over their family  
21 business, but it's soon after they've started their  
22 business or they've been running this business, where

1 they actually see what it's like to operate the  
2 business, encounter difficulties, have questions.

3           And I'm just wondering if your Boots to  
4 Business Program also has that early-stage business  
5 component, almost like a -- maybe it's in partnership  
6 with SCORE or some of your other partners. But do you  
7 have -- are you developing something that's a little  
8 bit on the back end, but it's in the early stage of the  
9 rollout of the business?

10           MR. CHODOS: It's a wonderful question, and it  
11 is the fundamental piece of this program. So this  
12 program is going to involve an introduction to  
13 entrepreneurship, essentially an invitation to learn  
14 about entrepreneurship in the form of a video that will  
15 be available to all of our returning servicemen and  
16 women through TAP.

17           Those who are interested in entrepreneurship  
18 will then have a face-to-face opportunity to meet with  
19 one of our resource partners in a classroom experience  
20 in order to learn about entrepreneurship, to learn  
21 about, as I said, the opportunities, the challenges,  
22 and the realities of entrepreneurship.

1           They will then be introduced to the Resource  
2 Partner network. They will then have a chance to go  
3 through a more intensive implementation plan to really  
4 learn about the feasibility of their business. That  
5 will also be face to face, also with our resource  
6 partners.

7           And if they intend to launch, they will then  
8 be able to go through an eight-week online business  
9 plan builder course, where they will end up with their  
10 own customized business plan for their business.

11           But at each step along the way, they're going  
12 to be introduced to our resource partners and invited  
13 to connect into the resource partner network, wherever  
14 they go back after they transition out of their base,  
15 wherever they go back home, to connect in with their  
16 local SCORE chapter, their local SBDC, and their  
17 Women's Business Center back at home.

18           And as you know, the first question that any  
19 vet, and in fact any small business owner, asks after  
20 they learn about the realities of business planning is,  
21 how do I get my first loan? Where do I get my first  
22 bit of financing? What do I do in order to get that

1 first bit of friends and family financing, then perhaps  
2 a microloan, then connect with my local CDFI, perhaps,  
3 then connect with, when I'm ready, one of the members  
4 of our lending network and begin to move through the  
5 different stages of business development?

6 Our resource partners act as the concierges to  
7 all those programs and services, not just in the SBA  
8 but at SBA, at Treasury, at Ag, and all across the  
9 federal government.

10 One of the key advantages to this is that we  
11 always face the challenge of letting people know that  
12 we're here to help them. We're here to help them at  
13 every point along the way. This gives us the chance to  
14 introduce these youth men and women to all of the  
15 things that the federal government has to offer them in  
16 order to support them as they move back into their  
17 communities, and then to introduce them to all of the  
18 state and local and other economic development support  
19 that exists for them back home.

20 So we think that this opportunity to bring  
21 them into the network and form that lifelong connection  
22 is one of the key benefits of the program.

1                   CHAIRMAN JOHNS:   Earl?

2                   MR. PEEK:   Michael, I have to say that this is  
3   an excellent report, an excellent presentation.  A  
4   question is, how is the corporate and the private  
5   sector embracing the resource partners?  Are they a  
6   part of that reference to help the nation embrace, on  
7   the public and private side, our returning veterans?

8                   MR. CHODOS:  Thank you for the question.  As  
9   you know, the private sector is extremely engaged in  
10  issues of veterans entrepreneurship.  Many of our  
11  partners work every day with local public and private  
12  sector partnerships in order to deliver this kind of  
13  training locally.

14                  You will be hearing more as we go along about  
15  specific examples of that.  Obviously, the  
16  Entrepreneurship Boot Camp Program run out of Syracuse  
17  is one of those shining examples of how you have  
18  public/private support to make this kind of training  
19  effective.

20                  But at the end of the day, what our job is to  
21  do is to get these young men and women back into their  
22  local communities where that kind of local economic

1 development ecosystem is in place and is customized.  
2 So most of this is not going to be driven nationally.  
3 It's going to be this introduction and this framework  
4 that they can take with them back into their  
5 communities as they start those businesses.

6 CHAIRMAN JOHNS: Jim?

7 MR. WILFONG: Thank you very much, Michael.  
8 Very good. I just would like to comment that General  
9 Chuck Henry and I first called on the TAP Program at  
10 DOD in 2001 and suggested that we get this going. That  
11 was a long time ago. I think you remember that, Tom.

12 So I couldn't be happier. You know, sometimes  
13 government moves slowly, but it moves. And this is  
14 terrific. I'm glad to hear that this program is set  
15 up. I can tell you that I was involved in setting up  
16 an entrepreneurial education program in Maine 20 years  
17 ago, where we started offering certificate,  
18 community-based entrepreneurial education, and it's  
19 very effective. So this will have a real impact.

20 And I also would just lay to rest any concerns  
21 that anyone might have about young people having  
22 foolish ideas put in their head about starting a