

# Gold Star and Surviving Spouse Career Services Act

*Sponsored by Senator Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA),  
Senator Mark Kelly (D-AZ), and Senator Eric Schmitt (R-MO)*

## Summary

The bipartisan Gold Star and Surviving Spouse Career Services Act would increase access to job counseling services for spouses of members of the Armed Forces who died while on active duty.

## Background

Congress established the Veterans' Employment and Training Service at the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL VETS) to address the employment needs of veterans.<sup>1</sup> The office administers the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP), which gives every state funding to hire specialists as part of state workforce systems.<sup>2</sup> Under current law, DVOP specialists provide individualized career services to eligible veterans experiencing significant barriers to employment.

## The Problem

Surviving spouses are not currently eligible for the career services offered by DVOP specialists. Surviving spouses are widows or widowers whose spouses died while serving in the Armed Forces. There are more than 450,000 service-connected surviving spouses across the country.<sup>3</sup>

## The Solution

This bill would add surviving spouses to the list of eligible recipients for DVOP services. No new funding is needed to implement this legislative change, as DOL VETS has assessed that the increase in eligible recipients can be handled by the existing DVOP specialist positions.

## Endorsements

- American Legion
- American Policy Ventures
- National Partnership for Women and Families
- TAPS

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<sup>1</sup> [38 U.S.C. Chapter 41: Job Counseling, Training, and Placement Service for Veterans](#)

<sup>2</sup> [38 U.S.C. §4103A: Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program](#)

<sup>3</sup> Veterans Benefits Administration, Annual Benefits Report: Fiscal Year 2022, page 116, available at: <https://www.benefits.va.gov/REPORTS/abr/docs/2022-abr.pdf>.

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