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EMPLOYERS UNDERESTIMATE VETERANS' SKILLS AND BENEFITS OF HIRING

New Chamber study identifies veteran strengths and opportunities for improving employment

SAN DIEGO (November 8, 2017) – San Diego is home to the largest percentage of veterans in the workforce compared to our competitor metropolitan areas. Yet, the region has relatively high veteran unemployment. What's holding these veterans back from finding jobs? According to a study released today by the San Diego Regional Chamber Foundation, local businesses have less understanding of the veteran community than we might expect.

The employer survey also asks about knowledge of tax incentives, veteran-friendly hiring practices, and the value of the traits, attributes, and skills veterans bring to the workforce.

“Helping employers better understand the unique value veterans bring is key to addressing our region’s high veteran unemployment,” said Jerry Sanders, Chamber President and CEO. “We’ve identified areas where our many veteran service providers can work together to better communicate the value of our veteran workforce.”

The study looked at 18 traits, attributes, and skills that are of most value to employers, several of which veterans are believed to embody more than the typical civilian. Veterans were identified as “somewhat better” or “much better” than others by over 50 percent of employers when it comes to:

- determination and resilience
- accountability
- detail-oriented
- professionalism

In turn, the results identified several potential areas of focus for improving veteran employment efforts.

These include the traits, attributes and skills that scored high in importance to employers, and low in employers' impressions of the additional value brought by veterans. Those are:

- ability to learn complex concepts
- organization and managing multiple priorities
- creativity
- problem solving & critical thinking

"These results are consistent with what we've seen across our workforce: veterans are valuable and bring highly refined skills that are an asset to any employer," said Helen Robbins-Meyer, Chief Administrative Officer for the County of San Diego. "It's clear there is more work to be done and guided by this information we can improve the employment situation for veterans in San Diego."

Many would assume employers in San Diego likely have experience and understanding of the veteran community given the region's long military history. However, of the 300 respondents interviewed, 52.4 percent had not employed military veterans, members of the National Guard, or reservists as employees. The survey also found that 42.6 of respondents were unfamiliar with the veteran-focused federal and state tax breaks. These findings help to emphasize the need for additional outreach to employers about the value of veterans.

Underscoring the positive benefits of veteran employees, 77.0 percent of those employers with experience hiring veterans were very satisfied with those who have worked at their organization.

Sean Mahoney, chair of the Chamber's Defense, Veterans and Military Affairs Committee and Executive Director of zero8hundred said: "Connecting our skilled veterans to civilian careers is one of the most productive things we can do to strengthen our workforce and communities. For most veterans, getting the right job is the most important step to a successful future."

The full "Employers' Impressions of Veterans" study is available online [here](#).

About the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce

The San Diego Regional Chamber is the hub for connections and collaboration among the regional business community, and uses that clout to advocate for public policies and candidates that support economic growth and the creation of jobs for all businesses. As the largest local Chamber on the West Coast, representing approximately 2,500 businesses and an estimated 300,000 jobs, the San Diego Regional Chamber is fighting to make San Diego the most business-friendly region in California. For more information, please visit SDChamber.org or call 619-544-1300.

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