

Supporting Women Veterans: Applied Research

Since 2004, Business and Professional Women's (BPW) Foundation has focused on the forces shaping 21st Century workplaces that are impacting the lives of workingwomen, as well as issues that are specifically affecting young careerists and women veterans.

As we enter the 2008 Election Year, voters are interested in issues that impact workingwomen and families. Some candidates, particularly presidential candidates, remain strangely silent on these issues. With a continuing war that is also a major campaign topic; the public also wants to know how the country will service those who have valiantly served us.

Women veterans are a growing and important part of the U.S. Labor Force. In 1980, there were 1.1 million women veterans; as of 2007, their numbers had increased to 1.7 million. On October 19, 2007, BPW Foundation disseminated initial findings from its *Women Veterans in Transition* research project.

As women veterans enter the civilian workforce, they say they desire the same workplace characteristics as other working-women and experience many of the same challenges. Over half of all women veterans surveyed by BPW Foundation were married at the time they separated from the military, and similarly over half had dependents. About half of women veterans reported they were the primary earners in their household.

Respondents also stated that after transitioning they sought workplaces that offered fair compensation relative to male counterparts, opportunities for advancement, training and professional development opportunities, family leave options, health/ dental insurance, flexible work schedules, retirement plans and paid vacations.

Use BPW Foundation's research to formulate questions for candidates on these key issues. Learn where they stand on workingwomen, families and veterans. Below are sample questions based on research including references.



Questions for candidates:

How will you support efforts in your jurisdiction to advance and empower workingwomen?

Transitioning women veterans often immediately resume the role of caregiver. Would you support an extended period to allow successful transition as parents, caregivers and breadwinners?

Are you prepared to advocate for/develop a process to effectively handle the benefits and claims of injured/ disabled veterans in your jurisdiction?

Would you support incentives to employers that work to recruit and hire returning veterans?

How would you propose that public organizations partner with private organizations or employers to promote and support transitioning veterans and their families?

How would you ensure that information about veteran services are made available to women veterans in your jurisdiction?

A Snapshot of Findings

Issues important to women veterans in the workplace, such as work-life balance, are important to many different types of workers. It is believed that by highlighting programs and policies that support women veterans these same programs will benefit a larger pool.

Capturing information about the needs and experiences of women veterans is difficult. How would you support the expansion of research on the experiences of veterans?

Women veterans have income levels similar to other workingwomen. How will you support efforts to ensure wage equity across industries for workingwomen, in general?

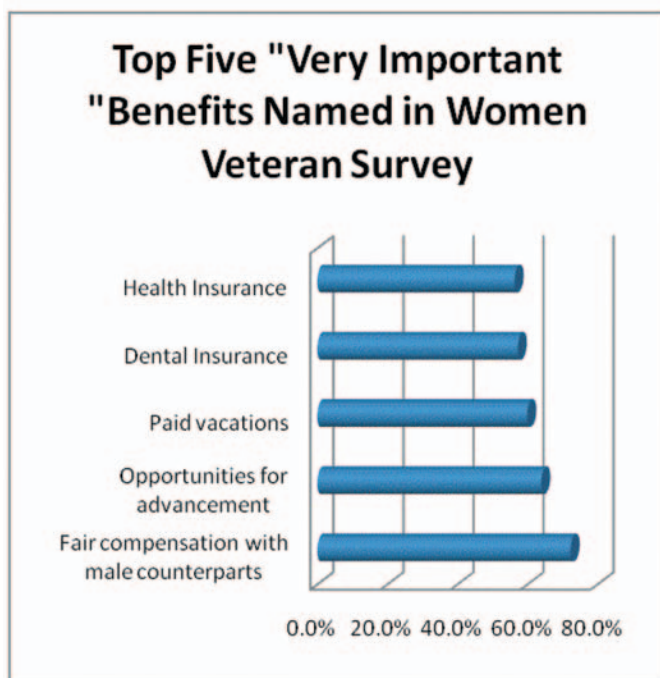
References:

Understanding the Complexity of Women Veterans' Career Transitions. (October 2007) BPW Foundation. www.bpwfoundation.org

"Employment Situation of Veterans" (May 2006). Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Women Veterans: Past, Present, Future. (September 2007) Department of Veteran Affairs, Office of Planning.

Throughout the year, BPW Foundation will provide questions that focus on a different aspect of research that you can use to "Take it Home" and apply to your work on behalf of workingwomen.



Message from the BPW Foundation Chair



BPW Foundation chair, Roslyn Ridgeway

In October, Business and Professional Women's Foundation released our ground-breaking report of women veterans transitioning into the civilian workplace. *Women Veterans in Transition* provides great information on how to recruit and support women veteran employees.

The resulting insight into this under-represented group of working women provides practical and policy implications for employers, the public and policymakers. Our research can also be applied to male veterans and other groups of working women to improve retention and recruitment of highly-skilled workers.

In recognition of Veterans' Day, we also released *Top Ten Recommendations to Support Women Veterans*, a companion piece for the report. The report and recommendations can be downloaded at www.bpwfoundation.org.

As part of this continuing research project, BPW Foundation will conduct deeper analysis into women veterans including comparing the experiences of women veterans to other groups of women in transition.

We sincerely thank the Harley Davidson Foundation, Inc. and Disabled American Veterans Charitable Service Trust (DAV) for co-sponsoring *Women Veterans in Transition* and supporting our vision for this ongoing research.

Looking for a way to support women veterans?

- Make a donation to our women veterans research project
- Share our recommendations with policymakers
- Advocate for increased resources to support women veterans when they return from deployment
- Use our research in your workplace and community
- Partner with BPW Foundation to continue research. 