



TECHNET
THE VOICE OF THE
INNOVATION ECONOMY

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July 9, 2019

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Chairman
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
555 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Cantwell, and Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation,

TechNet is the national, bipartisan network of innovation economy CEOs and senior executives. We write to express our support for S. 153, the *Supporting Veterans in STEM Careers Act*, and urge the full committee to pass it during the executive session scheduled for Wednesday, July 10, 2019.

TechNet's diverse membership includes dynamic American businesses ranging from startups to the most iconic companies on the planet and represents over three million employees and countless customers in the fields of information technology, e-commerce, the sharing and gig economies, advanced energy, cybersecurity, venture capital, and finance. Access to top science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) and computer science talent is critical for our businesses to create jobs, develop world-class products, and improve cybersecurity.

We are fully committed to cultivating a homegrown and more inclusive STEM talent pipeline that empowers all Americans to succeed in the rapidly changing economy. A top priority area for us is to facilitate the transition of service members to civilian life and put the skills they have developed in the military to work in STEM careers. Passing S. 153 is a step in the right direction, as the bill would do the following:

- Assist veterans re-entering the workforce by directing the National Science Foundation (NSF) to encourage veterans to study and pursue careers in STEM, update existing NSF programs to include outreach to veterans, and require annual reporting on veteran participation in STEM fields;

- Require the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) to establish an interagency working group to coordinate federal programs for transitioning and training veterans for STEM careers; and
- Develop a strategic plan to address the barriers that veterans face when reentering the workforce.

We strongly support each of these objectives. There are currently over [500,000](#) vacant computing jobs across the U.S., yet just over 60,000 computer science students graduated into the workforce last year. Our education system clearly is not producing enough skilled workers each year to fill these important jobs. However, more than 1.5 million members of the U.S. armed forces will retire from service and seek new careers by 2022, and many of them have learned specialized skills over the course of their training and service — in fields such as cybersecurity, physics and engineering, and information technology — which lend themselves well to high-paying STEM jobs in the private sector.

Securing America’s global innovation leadership in the 21st century begins at an early age at home and in our schools — but cannot be achieved only by focusing on traditional classrooms. As technology continues to rapidly advance, we must promote lifelong learning policies and programs that empower workers to attain the education and skills they need to stay current, advance their careers, and support their families as jobs evolve. Our American workforce can only reach its full potential if we embrace the diversity of our nation and succeed in bringing out the best of all talented and capable individuals who have too often been left behind. This includes helping veterans transition to STEM careers in the U.S.

For these reasons, we strongly support S. 153, the *Supporting Veterans in STEM Careers Act*. We appreciate the leadership of the bill’s lead sponsors, Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), and thank Senators Steve Daines (R-MT), Cory Gardner (R-CO), Mike Rounds (R-SD), and Jacky Rosen (D-NV) for co-sponsoring it. We also thank Representative Neal Dunn (R-FL) for passing this bill through the full House of Representatives by voice vote on February 27, 2019. We look forward to working with the bill’s proponents to ensure it is passed by the full Senate and signed into law this year.

Sincerely,



Linda Moore
TechNet President and CEO

CC: Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI)
Senator Marsha Blackburn (R-TN)

Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT)
Senator Roy Blunt (R-MO)
Senator Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV)
Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX)
Senator Steve Daines (R-MT)
Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL)
Senator Deb Fischer (R-NE)
Senator Cory Gardner (R-CO)
Senator Ron Johnson (R-WI)
Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)
Senator Mike Lee (R-UT)
Senator Ed Markey (D-MA)
Senator Jerry Moran (R-KS)
Senator Gary Peters (D-MI)
Senator Jacky Rosen (D-NV)
Senator Mike Rounds (R-SD)
Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL)
Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI)
Senator Rick Scott (R-FL)
Senator Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ)
Senator Dan Sullivan (R-AK)
Senator Jon Tester (D-MT)
Senator John Thune (R-SD)
Senator Tom Udall (D-NM)
Senator Todd Young (R-IN)