



Veterans Deserve Fair Consideration In The Job Market

Publication

2.20.13

The past decade has seen this country's biggest deployment of troops since World War II. Thousands of veterans have already returned home and thousands more will be returning soon.

Tragically, the murder of Texan Chris Kyle, ex-Navy SEAL and author of the book "American Sniper," has sparked questions that threaten principles for which he and other veterans risked and even lost their lives. After fighting to protect this nation, Kyle passionately supported the FITCO Cares Foundation Heroes Project. FITCO helps combat veterans affected by Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) return to fulfilling lives as civilians.

Ironically, Kyle's alleged murder by a combat veteran raised questions and some fears about reinstating or hiring vets returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Such general fears, however, are misplaced and wrong, for legal and moral reasons. Hopefully, Kyle's death can help fulfill his final mission, by shining the light of knowledge on how employers can and must support our returning veterans.

Many companies already recognize the skill, self-discipline and reliability of veterans. Thus, the companies actively recruit them. Yet, in a soft economy, unemployment among veterans has consistently hovered above the national average. This is especially true for younger females. Whatever the reasons for these statistics, employers cannot legally refuse to hire or re-instate people to the workforce because they are returning veterans. But to overcome unfounded fears and ultimately comply with the law, employers need facts.

Only about 20 percent of those who served in Iraq and Afghanistan have any form of PTSD. Those cases range from very mild to severe. Even severe conditions do not typically manifest themselves in violent conduct. When violence does occur, it tends to arise at home, rather than at work. In short, the fact that someone has served in the military or been in combat does not mean that they are predisposed toward workplace violence. Furthermore, it is against the law to refuse to hire or reinstate someone because he or she served. Most prominently, the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) provide many applicable rights and protections.

These rules represent more than minimum legal requirements. They describe the right thing to do.

This article appeared in the February 20, 2013 edition of the *Houston Chronicle*.

Related People



A. Kevin Troutman
Senior Counsel
713.292.5602
[Email](#)