

Statement of John Lowry III
Nominee for U.S. Department of Labor
Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training Service
Confirmation Hearing before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee
June 13, 2018

Good morning Chairman Isakson, Ranking Member Tester, and distinguished Members of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and for considering my nomination to serve as the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training Service, and thank you for your inspiring support of our Veterans, transitioning service members and their families. I also would like to thank the President of the United States for nominating me and Secretary Acosta for recommending me. And I owe a special debt of gratitude to my wife who is with me today. She knows from personal experience many of the challenges that our service member spouses face, and I am grateful for her tremendous support both during my years in uniform and throughout my time in the private sector.

As a veteran and as a businessman, I am passionate about the VETS mission to **prepare** America's service members and their spouses for meaningful careers, to **provide** employment resources and expertise, to **protect** their well-earned employment rights and to **promote** their employment opportunities. I believe that fulfilling this mission is not only the right thing to do for our veterans, but it is also important for America. As somebody who has served in leadership roles in manufacturing plants in Pennsylvania, Missouri, Wisconsin and Indiana, I know firsthand how exceptional our veteran employees can be. As you know, when veterans achieve their potential they are in a much better position to provide for their families, bring value to the organizations they serve and ultimately strengthen American competitiveness.

My experiences as a 15 year veteran of the regular active force and an additional 10 year veteran of the reserves (while working in the private sector) have provided me insights on the challenges our veterans face. My nearly two decades in the private sector also provide insights on the challenges facing businesses, and I've seen how veterans have helped companies meet those challenges. In my current role as the head of the US Supply Chain and Operations practice for Egon Zehnder (the world's largest privately held executive search and leadership consulting firm), I am in the business of helping companies address talent needs. I believe that all of these elements of my career have relevance for the VETS leadership role. Also relevant, I believe, is the great fortune I've had to work for many exceptional leaders over the years. I like to think that their example has influenced my leadership and management skills, and if fortunate enough to be confirmed, I would give my all to provide capable and ethical leadership to the VETS team as we serve this important mission for our great country.

As you are all well aware, the screening and training one goes through in the military, the responsibilities that service members are given at a young age and the fact that veterans spend their formative years in a culture of accountability and mission focus, provide soft skills to employers that are arguably unmatched by other feeder pools. Unfortunately, however, these soft skills are often not enough to meet the needs of today's employers. That's why, if confirmed, I would make the ongoing apprenticeship initiative a particular priority as apprenticeships --which I have supported during my manufacturing career-- are a particularly good tool to provide critical skills to transitioning and transitioned service members alike. So too, will engaging employers to participate in the Hire Vets Act recognition program be a priority. Broad participation will allow the program to pay for itself while also promoting the many benefits of hiring veterans. My final priority, if confirmed, would be

to promote a continuous improvement mindset at VETS whereby we think creatively on how we can better serve our veterans and be responsible stewards of our limited resources. To that end, I would make it a personal priority to strengthen relationships with other governmental agencies, VSOs and other external stakeholders who support our veterans.

In closing, if confirmed, I will work closely with you, with our partners, stakeholders and with the dedicated VETS team to provide transitioning service members, veterans, and their families with the best possible resources that they will need to enable their success in today's economy. Thank you again for your dedication and commitment to our veterans and for your consideration of my nomination. I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you today and am happy to answer any questions you may have.