

Welcome to USERRA 101 Text/Script

Charles "Chick" Ciccolella: Hello I'm Chick Ciccolella, Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment & Training at the United States Department of Labor.

Bob Hollingsworth: And I'm Bob Hollingsworth the Executive Director for the National Committee Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve or ESGR. Welcome to USERRA 101. Every day men and woman from around the country are taking leave from their jobs in the civilian work place to bravely serve and defend their country at any moments notice as proud members of the United States military. When these service members return home from their military service, there're often challenges to overcome. Many times, the employers are faced with losing these valuable employees for weeks, months, or even years. This presents special business decisions to ensure profitability.

Ciccolella: ESGR and the Department of Labor VETS offices have joined together as a partnership to assist National Guard and Reserve personnel serving on active duty. It is imperative that we as a nation do all we can to ensure that men and women in our military services have every opportunity to provide for themselves and their families when they return to the civilian labor force.

Hollingsworth: It's vitally important that our two organizations work together and communicate, not just at the policy level, but at all levels within each state and territory, in order to assist both our service members and their employers in any USERRA issues. Communications between committee ombudsmen and their respective state Department of Labor and VETS offices is essential, especially when a returning service member has been terminated from their employment. As a Department of Labor VETS ombudsmen team, we must do all we can within the USERRA guidelines to assist service members returning to their civilian employment status. Both the affected service member and their families are counting on us to assist them in their civilian employment relationships.

Ciccolella: We can't do this job alone and we recognize how important the ESGR ombudsmen are to VETS in resolving USERRA related cases and more importantly to our guardsmen and reservists and to their employers. Sometimes, misunderstandings result, either from poor communication between employers and their employees or from a lack of familiarization with the rights and responsibilities of the employer or the employees that are defined by the USERRA law. I can't stress enough the importance of an ESGR ombudsmen being able to reach out to educate both our service members and their employers on their USERRA rights and responsibilities and helping to resolve numerous cases through informal mediation.

Hollingsworth: I challenge all ESGR field committees and their ombudsmen to reach out to your respective Department of Labor VETS state representatives and invite them to your field committee meetings, functions and training events. The relationships that you both build now will pay multiple dividends when referrals become necessary. If an ombudsman has exhausted every possible means to resolve his service member's case without coming to an acceptable resolution, the ombudsman will be referring the service member to someone on the DOL VETS staff with whom they have developed a personal relationship. This Department of Labor VETS and ESGR team will ensure that the service member will receive seamless handoff of their case information from ESGR to the Dept of Labor.

Ciccolella: The web based USERRA and regulations training you're about to undertake has been developed as a joint Department of Labor VETS and ESGR interactive, comprehensive look into the USERRA statute, as well as the rights it provides to our service members and their employers. USERRA 101 is designed to help you achieve a basic understanding of the law and the regulations—how they both work, as well as what to do and where to go when difficult employment and reemployment situations occur.

Hollingsworth: ESGR ombudsmen and volunteers in the Department of Labor VETS employees should keep in mind that USERRA and their regulations are complex. There may be times that service members and employers will need further guidance in understanding their rights and responsibilities under the law. If you have further USERRA questions after completing this interactive web based training, please contact either ESGR at 1-800-336-4590 or visit the Department of Labor VETS web page to locate the closest Department of Labor representative in your area.

Ciccolella: This is all about helping our National Guard and Reservists. Thank you for what you're doing every day to help our men and women in uniform.

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