Written by Joe March
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INDIANAPOLIS (Feb. 13, 2013) -- American Legion National Commander James E. Koutz responded to President Obama's State of the Union Address Tuesday with a word of welcome to 34,000 troops the president said would be coming home from Afghanistan this year. "American Legion service officers stand ready to support our men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces and help them understand their VA benefits. American Legion-sponsored job fairs and business workshops await their return, offering opportunities to convert military experience into successful careers. American Legion posts and individual members are available for those who come home wondering where to turn for camaraderie and support. That is what we do. It is who we are."

Koutz said he looks forward to meeting with President Obama later this month to discuss specific ways The American Legion can help DoD, VA, veterans and their families make the adjustment to postwar lives.

"No one does more than The American Legion to help returning veterans," Koutz said. "This organization was built on that very concept. As the president has said in past speeches, there is no reason the returning veterans of the Global War on Terrorism cannot drive the U.S. economy forward, as it did after the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 -- which The American Legion authored as World War II was ending -- and build another half-century of U.S. economic prosperity."

Veterans can and will be essential to the U.S. economic recovery, Koutz explained. "There was no doubt from the State of the Union Address that our nation's highest priority is the improvement of our economy. Veterans have proven in the past that they can be the catalysts.

“The American Legion is dedicated to convincing employers, many of whom already know, that veterans can once again lead our nation to a new era of economic performance and hope. We look forward to working with VA and DoD to ease the transition process, provide our newest generation of veterans with the support they need, and rebuild our economy as a nation. It is really the least we can do for those who have stood strong against the threat of terrorism and kept it from our shores for over a decade."

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