

SAMPLE RESPONSE TO DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
ON RANDOLPH-SHEPPARD AND JWOD POLICY

IMPORTANT: RESPONSE DEADLINE IS MARCH 1, 2006

Director  
Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy  
3060 Defense Pentagon  
Attn: Ms. Susan Pollack  
Washington, DC 20301-3060

Dear Director:

I am a blind vendor operating a vending facility in (insert city and State). This letter is a response to the request in the Federal Register on February 3, 2006 for suggestions on policy related to military mess hall and military troop dining operations as required by Congress in section 848 of the FY 2006 National Defense Authorization Act (P. L. 109-63). Your responsibility, as I understand it, is to ensure that beneficiaries of both the Randolph-Sheppard Act and the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Act are considered, because Congress has determined that both laws apply to troop dining procurements.

As you know, the Randolph-Sheppard Act requires Federal agencies to give the blind priority in the operation of vending and other retail facilities on Federal property. The priority is acknowledged by the Department of Defense in the area of military dining contracts, and the priority has been applied in several Federal court cases. Blind vendors are assigned by State licensing agencies to manage such contracts. Under the JWOD Act, a community rehabilitation program provides direct labor for such duties as mess attendant services.

It is important for you to understand the value of the Randolph-Sheppard program to the blind of this country. We believe it is the most effective employment program ever devised for blind people. We blind business people operate cafeterias, snack bars, highway vending, and a few troop dining contracts. Were it not for the blind vending facility program, thousands of blind people would not have been able to support their families, pay taxes, and be independent.

I would like for you to consider carefully what the Randolph-Sheppard program means to me personally, and to my family.

(Insert your experience with the program, what you do, how many people you employ, who they are [especially if they have a disability] and describe what the program has meant to you)

I support the expressed policy of the Office of Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy requiring the use of JWOD community rehabilitation programs as subcontractors to State licensing agencies when military troop feeding contracts are awarded under the Randolph-Sheppard Act, preserving the priority under that Act. That policy fulfills the intent of Congress, and addresses the needs of blind entrepreneurs as well as severely disabled workers.

Whatever policy you recommend to the Congress, please ensure that the Randolph-Sheppard program is preserved for the thousands who benefit from it, and for those who follow.

Sincerely,