REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS’ AFFAIRS
OF THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
DURING THE
ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS
PURSUANT TO
Clause 1(d) Rule XI of the Rules of the House
OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 16, 2016.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House
on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE
23–035 WASHINGTON : 2016
LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS’ AFFAIRS,

Hon. Karen L. Haas,
Clerk of the House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Dear Ms. Haas: In accordance with clause (d)1 of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives for the 114th Congress, I submit herewith the report of the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs setting forth its activities in reviewing and studying the application, administration, and execution of those laws, the subject matter of which is within the jurisdiction of our committee.

Sincerely,

Jeff Miller,
Chairman.
Committee Staff

Jonathan A. Towers, Staff Director
Michael F. Brinck, Deputy Staff Director

Don Phillips, Staff Director (Minority Office)
David M. Tucker, Deputy Staff Director and Chief Counsel, Staff Director, Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations (Minority Office) (January 2015–August 2016)
Brandt Anderson, Research Assistant, Subcommittee on Health (January 2015–May 2015)
Kelsey Baron, Professional Staff Member, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity
Kiley Shulman, Staff Assistant (September 2015–Present)
Meghan Bland, Executive Assistant (Minority Office) (June 2014–November 2015)
Carolyn Blydes, Senior Legislative Assistant (Minority Office)
Tammy Bonzanto, Healthcare Investigator, Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations (June 2015–Present)
Justin Brown, Democratic Staff Director, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs (January 2015–September 2016)
Curt Cashour, Communications Director
Amy Centanni, Investigative Counsel, Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations
Jonathan A. Clark, Staff Director, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity
Cecilia Daly, Professional Staff Member (April 2015–Present)
Hillary Dickinson, Research Assistant, Subcommittee on Health (August 2015–Present)
Andrea Donelson, Executive Assistant and New Media Manager (Minority Office) (November 2015–Present)
Bernadine N. Dotson, Financial Administrator and Printing Clerk
Jessica G. Eggimann, Chief Clerk, Office Manager, and Legislative Coordinator
Lee Footer, Professional Staff Member (Minority Office)
Samatha E. Gonzalez, Professional Staff Member, Subcommittee on Health
Anderson Griffin, Communications Director (Minority Office, July 2016–Present)
Eric E. Hannel, Staff Director, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
Christine Hill, Staff Director, Subcommittee on Health
Jon Hordnette, Investigative Counsel, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
Christina Mandriucci, Staff Assistant (January 2015–August 2015)
William Mallison, Contract Investigator, Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations (July 2015–Present)
Tim Mantegna, Digital Manager and Press Assistant (February 2015–Present)
Carol S. Murray, Legislative Coordinator and Office Manager (Minority Office)
Caroline Ponsetti, Digital Manager and Press Assistant (February 2016–Present)
Harold Rees, Senior Investigative Counsel, Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations
Rory Riley, Staff Director and Counsel, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs (January 2015–October 2015)
Grace Ridden, Investigative Counsel (Minority Office) (May 2015–Present)
Lauren Rogen, Professional Staff Member and Counsel, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs (January 2015–March 2015)
Michael N. Siegel, Digital Manager (January 2015–February 2015)
Alyssa Schroeder, Research Assistant, Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs (November 2015–Present)
David Simon, Communications Director (Minority Office) (January 2015–July 2016)
Ian Smith, Research Assistant, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs (January 2015–February 2015)
Erin Snow, Staff Director, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity (Minority Office) (April 2015–Present)
Maria Tripplaa, Staff Director, Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs (October 2015–Present)
Saki Ververis, Senior Legislative Assistant (Minority Office) (January 2016–July 2016)
John Vick, Research Assistant, Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs (April 2015–October 2015)
Cathleen C. Whelmo, Staff Director, Subcommittee on Health (Minority Office)
# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jurisdiction of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oversight Agenda for the 114th Congress</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership and Organization</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislative and Oversight Activities of the Full Committee</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities of the Subcommittee on Health</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Messages from the President and other Executive Branch Communications</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS’ AFFAIRS FOR THE 114TH CONGRESS

DECEMBER 16, 2016.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. MILLER, from the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, pursuant to Clause 1(d) Rule XI, submitted the following

REPORT

Clause 1(d) of the rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives for the 114th Congress requires that each standing committee, not later than January 2 of each year, submit to the House a report on the activities of that committee, including separate sections summarizing the legislative and oversight activities of that committee during that Congress.

JURISDICTION—RULES OF THE HOUSE

Rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives establishes the standing committees of the House and their jurisdiction. Under that rule, all bills, resolutions, and other matters relating to the subjects within the jurisdiction of any standing committee shall be referred to such committee. Clause 1(s) of Rule X establishes the jurisdiction of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs as follows:

(1) Veterans' measures generally.
(2) Cemeteries of the United States in which veterans of any war or conflict are or may be buried, whether in the United States or abroad (except cemeteries administered by the Secretary of the Interior).
(3) Compensation, vocational rehabilitation, and education of veterans.
(4) Life insurance issued by the Government on account of service in the Armed Forces.
(5) Pensions of all the wars of the United States, general and special.
(6) Readjustment of servicemembers to civil life.
(7) Servicemembers’ civil relief.
(8) Veterans’ hospitals, medical care, and treatment of veterans.

RULES OF THE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS’ AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 114TH CONGRESS

RULE 1—GENERAL PROVISIONS

(a) APPLICABILITY OF HOUSE RULES.—The Rules of the House are
the rules of the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and its subcommit-
tees so far as applicable, except that a motion to recess from day
to day, and a motion to dispense with the first reading (in full) of
a bill or resolution, if printed copies are available, are non-debat-
able privileged motions in Committees and subcommittees.
(b) SUBCOMMITTEES.—Each subcommittee of the Committee is a
part of the Committee and is subject to the authority and direction
of the Committee and to its rules so far as applicable.
(c) INCORPORATION OF HOUSE RULE ON COMMITTEE PROCEDURE.—Rule XI of the Rules of the House, which pertains entirely
to Committee procedure, is incorporated and made part of the rules
of the Committee to the extent applicable. Pursuant to clause
2(a)(3) of Rule XI of the Rules of the House, the Chairman of the
full Committee is directed to offer a motion under clause 1 of Rule
XXII of the Rules of the House whenever the Chairman considers
it appropriate.
(d) VICE CHAIRMAN.—Pursuant to clause 2(d) of Rule XI of the
Rules of the House, the Chairman of the full Committee shall des-
ignate the Vice Chairman of the Committee.

RULE 2—REGULAR AND ADDITIONAL MEETINGS

(a) REGULAR MEETINGS.—The regular meeting day for the Com-
mittee shall be at 10 a.m. on the second Wednesday of each month
in such place as the Chairman may designate. However, the Chair-
man may dispense with a regular Wednesday meeting of the Com-
mittee.
(b) ADDITIONAL MEETINGS.—The Chairman of the Committee
may call and convene, as he considers necessary, additional meet-
ings of the Committee for the consideration of any bill or resolution
pending before the Committee or for the conduct of other Com-
mittee business. The Committee shall meet for such purpose pursu-
ant to the call of the Chairman.
(c) NOTICE.—The Chairman shall notify each member of the
Committee of the agenda of each regular and additional meeting of
the Committee at least 24 hours before the time of the meeting, ex-
cept under circumstances the Chairman determines to be of an
emergency nature. Under such circumstances, the Chairman shall
make an effort to consult the ranking minority member, or in such
member’s absence, the next ranking minority party member of the
Committee.

RULE 3—MEETINGS AND HEARINGS GENERALLY

(a) OPEN MEETINGS AND HEARINGS.—Meetings and hearings of
the Committee and each of its subcommittees shall be open to the
public unless closed in accordance with clause 2(g) of Rule XI of the Rules of the House.

(b) ANNOUNCEMENT OF HEARING.—The Chairman, in the case of a hearing to be conducted by the Committee, and the subcommittee Chairman, in the case of a hearing to be conducted by a subcommittee, shall make public announcement of the date, place, and subject matter of any hearing to be conducted on any measure or matter at least one week before the commencement of that hearing unless the Committee or the subcommittee determines that there is good cause to begin the hearing at an earlier date. In the latter event, the Chairman or the subcommittee Chairman, as the case may be, shall consult with the ranking minority member and make such public announcement at the earliest possible date. The clerk of the Committee shall promptly notify the Daily Clerk of the Congressional Record and the Committee scheduling service of the House Information Resources as soon as possible after such public announcement is made.

(c) WIRELESS TELEPHONE USE PROHIBITED.—No person may use a wireless telephone during a Committee or subcommittee meeting or hearing.

(d) MEDIA COVERAGE.—Any meeting of the Committee or its subcommittees that is open to the public shall be open to coverage by radio, television, and still photography in accordance with the provisions of clause 4(f) of House Rule XI as follows:

(1) If audio or visual coverage of the hearing or meeting is to be presented to the public as live coverage, that coverage shall be conducted and presented without commercial sponsorship.

(2) The allocation among the television media of the positions or the number of television cameras permitted by a committee or subcommittee chair in a hearing or meeting room shall be in accordance with fair and equitable procedures devised by the Executive Committee of the Radio and Television Correspondents’ Galleries.

(3) Television cameras shall be placed so as not to obstruct in any way the space between a witness giving evidence or testimony and any member of the committee or the visibility of that witness and that member to each other.

(4) Television cameras shall operate from fixed positions but may not be placed in positions that obstruct unnecessarily the coverage of the hearing or meeting by the other media.

(5) Equipment necessary for coverage by the television and radio media may not be installed in, or removed from, the hearing or meeting room while the committee is in session.

(6)(A) Except as provided in subdivision (B), floodlights, spotlights, strobelights, and flashguns may not be used in providing any method of coverage of the hearing or meeting.

(B) The television media may install additional lighting in a hearing or meeting room, without cost to the Government, in order to raise the ambient lighting level in a hearing or meeting room to the lowest level necessary to provide adequate television coverage of a hearing or meeting at the current state of the art of television coverage.

(7) If requests are made by more of the media than will be permitted by a committee or subcommittee chair for coverage
of a hearing or meeting by still photography, that coverage shall be permitted on the basis of a fair and equitable pool arrangement devised by the Standing Committee of Press Photographers.

(8) Photographers may not position themselves between the witness table and the members of the committee at any time during the course of a hearing or meeting.

(9) Photographers may not place themselves in positions that obstruct unnecessarily the coverage of the hearing by the other media.

(10) Personnel providing coverage by the television and radio media shall be currently accredited to the Radio and Television Correspondents’ Galleries.

(11) Personnel providing coverage by still photography shall be currently accredited to the Press Photographers’ Gallery.

(12) Personnel providing coverage by the television and radio media and by still photography shall conduct themselves and their coverage activities in an orderly and unobtrusive manner.

(e) REQUIREMENTS FOR TESTIMONY.—

(1) Each witness who is to appear before the Committee or a subcommittee shall file with the clerk of the Committee, at least 48 hours in advance of his or her appearance, or at such other time as designated by the Chairman after consultation with the Ranking Member, a written statement of his or her proposed testimony. Each witness shall, to the greatest extent practicable, also provide a copy of such written testimony in an electronic format prescribed by the Chairman. Each witness shall limit any oral presentation to a summary of the written statement.

(2) Pursuant to clause 2(g)(5) of Rule XI of the Rules of the House:

(A) In the case of a witness appearing in a non-governmental capacity, a written statement of proposed testimony shall include a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of any Federal grants or contracts, or contracts or payments originating with a foreign government, received during the current calendar year or either of the two previous calendar years by the witness and related to the subject matter of the hearing.

(B) The disclosure required by this Rule shall include the amount and source of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) related to the subject matter of the hearing and the amount and country of origin of any payment or contract related to the subject matter of the hearing originating with a foreign government.

(f) CALLING AND QUESTIONING WITNESSES.—

(1) Committee and subcommittee members may question witnesses only when they have been recognized by the Chairman of the Committee or subcommittee for that purpose, and only for a 5-minute period until all members present have had an opportunity to question a witness. The 5-minute period for questioning a witness by any one member may be extended only with the unanimous consent of all members present. The questioning of witnesses in both Committee and subcommittee
hearings shall be initiated by the Chairman, followed by the ranking minority party member and all other members alternating between the majority and minority. Except as otherwise announced by the Chairman at the beginning of a hearing, members who are present at the start of the hearing will be recognized before other members who arrive after the hearing has begun. In recognizing members to question witnesses in this fashion, the Chairman shall take into consideration the ratio of the majority to minority members present and shall establish the order of recognition for questioning in such a manner as not to disadvantage the members of the majority.

(2) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (1) regarding the 5-minute rule, the Chairman after consultation with the ranking minority member may designate an equal number of members of the Committee or subcommittee majority and minority party to question a witness for a period not longer than 30 minutes. In no event shall the Chairman allow a member to question a witness for an extended period under this rule until all members present have had the opportunity to ask questions under the 5-minute rule. The Chairman after consultation with the ranking minority member may permit Committee staff for its majority and minority party members to question a witness for equal specified periods of time.

(3) Non-Committee Members may be invited to sit at the dais for Committee hearings with the unanimous consent of all Members present. Further, non-Committee Members may be recognized for questioning of witnesses but only after all Committee Members have first been recognized.

(4) When a hearing is conducted by the Committee or a subcommittee on any measure or matter, the minority party members on the Committee shall be entitled, upon request to the Chairman of a majority of those minority members before the completion of the hearing, to call witnesses selected by the minority to testify with respect to that measure or matter during at least one day of the hearing thereon.

(g) SUBPOENAS—Pursuant to clause 2(m) of rule XI of the Rules of the House, a subpoena may be authorized and issued by the Committee or a subcommittee in the conduct of any investigation or series of investigations or activities, only when authorized by a majority of the members voting, a majority being present.

(h) NOTICE REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) The text of all bills or resolutions for markup, and any amendments in the nature of a substitute to such bills or resolution to be first recognized by the Chairman, shall be made available, via written or electronic notice, to Committee members at least 48 hours prior to a scheduled markup, except as agreed to by unanimous consent.

(2) Subject to the second sentence of this paragraph, it shall not be in order for the Committee to consider any amendment proposed to a bill or resolution under consideration by the Committee, or proposed to an amendment in the nature of a substitute noticed under paragraph (1), unless a written or electronic copy of such amendment has been delivered to each Member of the Committee (or Subcommittee for purposes of Subcommittee markups) at least 24 hours before the meeting
at which the amendment is to be proposed. This paragraph may be waived by unanimous consent and shall apply only when the 48-hour written notice has been provided in accordance with paragraph (1).

(i) CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE SCORING—The Committee shall not include any bill or resolution for consideration during a committee markup which is not accompanied by an accounting from the Congressional Budget Office of the mandatory and discretionary costs or savings associated with such bill or resolution.

The accounting from the Congressional Budget Office need not be official, but is expected to provide Committee members with an approximation of the budgetary impact a bill or resolution may have prior to any vote to favorably forward or report such bill or resolution. The requirements of this paragraph may be waived by a majority of Committee members, a quorum being present.

RULE 4—QUORUM AND RECORD VOTES; POSTPONEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS

(a) WORKING QUORUM.—A majority of the members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for business and a majority of the members of any subcommittee shall constitute a quorum thereof for business, except that two members shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of taking testimony and receiving evidence.

(b) QUORUM FOR REPORTING.—No measure or recommendation shall be reported to the House of Representatives unless a majority of the Committee was actually present.

(c) RECORD VOTES.—A record vote may be demanded by one-fifth of the members present or, in the apparent absence of a quorum, by any one member. With respect to any record vote on any motion to amend or report, the total number of votes cast for and against, and the names of those members voting for and against, shall be included in the report of the Committee on the bill or resolution.

(d) PROHIBITION AGAINST PROXY VOTING.—No vote by any member of the Committee or a subcommittee with respect to any measure or matter may be cast by proxy.

(e) POSTPONING PROCEEDINGS.—Committee and subcommittee chairmen may postpone further proceedings when a record vote is ordered on the question of approving a measure or matter or on adopting an amendment, and may resume proceedings within two legislative days on a postponed question after reasonable notice. When proceedings resume on a postponed question, notwithstanding any intervening order for the previous question, an underlying proposition shall remain subject to further debate or amendment to the same extent as when the question was postponed.

RULE 5—SUBCOMMITTEES

(a) ESTABLISHMENT AND JURISDICTION.—

(1) There shall be four subcommittees of the Committee as follows:

(A) Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, which shall have legislative, oversight and investigative jurisdiction over compensation; general and special pensions of all the wars of the United States; life insurance issued by the Government on account of service in
the Armed Forces; cemeteries of the United States in which veterans of any war or conflict are or may be buried, whether in the United States or abroad, except cemeteries administered by the Secretary of the Interior; burial benefits; the Board of Veterans’ Appeals; and the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.

(B) Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, which shall have legislative, oversight and investigative jurisdiction over education of veterans, employment and training of veterans, vocational rehabilitation, veterans’ housing programs, readjustment of servicemembers to civilian life, and servicemembers civil relief.

(C) Subcommittee on Health, which shall have legislative, oversight, and investigative jurisdiction over the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) including medical services, medical support and compliance, medical facilities, medical and prosthetic research, and major and minor construction.

(D) Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, which shall have oversight and investigative jurisdiction over veterans’ matters generally, information technology, procurement, and over such matters as may be referred to the subcommittee by the Chairman of the full Committee for its oversight or investigation and for its appropriate recommendations. The subcommittee shall have legislative jurisdiction over such bills or resolutions as may be referred to it by the Chairman of the full Committee.

(2) Each subcommittee shall have responsibility for such other measures or matters as the Chairman refers to it.

(b) VACANCIES.—Any vacancy in the membership of a subcommittee shall not affect the power of the remaining members to execute the functions of that subcommittee.

(c) RATIOS.—On each subcommittee, there shall be a ratio of majority party members to minority party members which shall be consistent with the ratio on the full Committee.

(d) REFERRAL TO SUBCOMMITTEES.—The Chairman of the Committee may refer a measure or matter, which is within the general responsibility of more than one of the subcommittees of the Committee, as the Chairman deems appropriate. In referring any measure or matter to a subcommittee, the Chairman of the Committee may specify a date by which the subcommittee shall report thereon to the Committee.

(e) POWERS AND DUTIES.—

(1) Each subcommittee is authorized to meet, hold hearings, receive evidence, and report to the full Committee on all matters referred to it or under its jurisdiction. Subcommittee chairmen shall set dates for hearings and meetings of their respective subcommittees after consultation with the Chairman of the Committee and other subcommittee chairmen with a view toward avoiding simultaneous scheduling of Committee and subcommittee meetings or hearings whenever possible.

(2) Whenever a subcommittee has ordered a bill, resolution, or other matter to be reported to the Committee, the Chairman of the subcommittee reporting the bill, resolu-
tion, or matter to the full Committee, or any member authorized by the subcommittee to do so shall notify the Chairman and the ranking minority party member of the Committee of the Subcommittee’s action.

(3) A member of the Committee who is not a member of a particular subcommittee may sit with the subcommittee during any of its meetings and hearings, but shall not have authority to vote, cannot be counted for a quorum, and cannot raise a point of order at the meeting or hearing.

(4) Non-Committee Members may be invited to sit at the dais for subcommittee hearings with the unanimous consent of all Members present. Further, non-Committee Members may be recognized for questioning of witnesses but only after all subcommittee Members have first been recognized for questioning.

(5) Each subcommittee shall provide the Committee with copies of such record votes taken in subcommittee and such other records with respect to the subcommittee as the Chairman of the Committee deems necessary for the Committee to comply with all rules and regulations of the House.

RULE 6—GENERAL OVERSIGHT RESPONSIBILITY

(a) PURPOSE.—Pursuant to clause 2 of Rule X of the Rules of the House, the Committee shall carry out oversight responsibilities. In order to assist the House in—

(1) Its analysis, appraisal, evaluation of—

(A) The application, administration, execution, and effectiveness of the laws enacted by the Congress, or

(B) Conditions and circumstances, which may indicate the necessity or desirability of enacting new or additional legislation, and

(2) Its formulation, consideration and enactment of such modifications or changes in those laws, and of such additional legislation, as may be necessary or appropriate, the Committee and its various subcommittees, consistent with their jurisdiction as set forth in Rule 5, shall have oversight responsibilities as provided in subsection (b).

(b) REVIEW OF LAWS AND PROGRAMS.—The Committee and its subcommittees shall review and study, on a continuing basis, the applications, administration, execution, and effectiveness of those laws, or parts of laws, the subject matter of which is within the jurisdiction of the Committee or subcommittee, and the organization and operation of the Federal agencies and entities having responsibilities in or for the administration and execution thereof, in order to determine whether such laws and the programs thereunder are being implemented and carried out in accordance with the intent of the Congress and whether such programs should be continued, curtailed, or eliminated. In addition, the Committee and its subcommittees shall review and study any conditions or circumstances which may indicate the necessity or desirability of enacting new or additional legislation within the jurisdiction of the Committee or subcommittee (whether or not any bill or resolution has been introduced with respect thereto), and shall on a con-
pending basis undertake future research and forecasting on matters
within the jurisdiction of the Committee or subcommittee.

(c) OVERSIGHT PLAN.—Not later than February 15 of the first
session of a Congress, the Committee shall meet in open session,
with a quorum present, to adopt its oversight plans for that Con-
gress for submission to the Committee on House Administration
and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, in ac-
cordance with the provisions of clause 2(d) of Rule X of the Rules
of the House.

(d) OVERSIGHT BY SUBCOMMITTEES.—The existence and activities
of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations shall in no
way limit the responsibility of the other subcommittees of the Com-
mittee on Veterans’ Affairs for carrying out oversight duties.

RULE 7—BUDGET ACT RESPONSIBILITIES

(a) BUDGET ACT RESPONSIBILITIES.—Pursuant to clause 4(f)(1) of
Rule X of the Rules of the House, the Committee shall submit to
the Committee on the Budget not later than six weeks after the
President submits his budget, or at such time as the Committee on
the Budget may request—

(1) Its views and estimates with respect to all matters to be
set forth in the concurrent resolution on the budget for the en-
suing fiscal year that are within its jurisdiction or functions; and

(2) An estimate of the total amounts of new budget author-
ity, and budget outlays resulting therefrom, to be provided or
authorized in all bills and resolutions within its jurisdiction
that it intends to be effective during that fiscal year.

RULE 8—RECORDS AND OTHER MATTERS

(a) TRANSCRIPTS.—There shall be a transcript made of each reg-
ular and additional meeting and hearing of the Committee and its
subcommittees. Any such transcript shall be a substantially ver-
batim account of remarks actually made during the proceedings,
subject only to technical, grammatical, and typographical correc-
tions authorized by the person making the remarks involved.

(b) RECORDS.—

(1) The Committee shall keep a record of all actions of the
Committee and each of its subcommittees. The record shall
contain all information required by clause 2(e)(1) of Rule XI of
the Rules of the House and shall be available for public inspection
at reasonable times in the offices of the Committee.

(2) There shall be kept in writing a record of the proceedings
of the Committee and each of its subcommittees, including a
record of the votes on any question on which a recorded vote
is demanded. The result of each such record vote shall be made
available by the Committee for inspection by the public at rea-
sonable times in the offices of the Committee. Information so
available for public inspection shall include a description of the
amendment, motion, order or other proposition and the name
of each member voting for and each member voting against
such amendment, motion, order, or proposition, and the names
of those members present but not voting.
(c) AVAILABILITY OF ARCHIVED RECORDS.—The records of the Committee at the National Archives and Records Administration shall be made available for public use in accordance with Rule VII of the Rules of the House. The Chairman shall notify the ranking minority member of any decision, pursuant to clause 3 or clause 4 of Rule VII of the Rules of the House, to withhold a record otherwise available, and the matter shall be presented to the Committee for a determination on written request of any member of the Committee.

(d) AVAILABILITY OF PUBLICATIONS.—Pursuant to clause 2(e)(4) of Rule XI of the Rules of the House, the Committee shall make its publications available in electronic form to the maximum extent feasible.

RULE 9—TRAVEL

(a) REQUIREMENTS FOR TRAVEL.—All requests for travel, funded by the Committee, for Members and staff in connection with activities or subject matters under the general jurisdiction of the Committee, shall be submitted to the Chair for approval or disapproval. All travel requests should be submitted to the Chair at least five working days in advance of the proposed travel. For all travel funded by any other source, notice shall be given to the Chair at least five working days in advance of the proposed travel. All travel requests shall be submitted to the Chair in writing and include the following:

(1) The purpose of the travel.
(2) The dates during which the travel is to occur.
(3) The names of the locations to be visited and the length of time to be spent in each.
(4) The names of members and staff of the Committee for whom the authorization is sought. Travel by the minority shall be submitted to the Chair via the Ranking Member.

(b) TRIP REPORTS.—Members and staff shall make a written report to the Chair within 15 working days on all travel approved under this subsection. Reports shall include a description of their itinerary, expenses, and activities, and pertinent information gained as a result of such travel.

When travel involves majority and minority Members or staff, the majority shall submit the report to the Chair on behalf of the majority and minority. The minority may append additional remarks to the report at their discretion.

(c) APPLICABILITY OF HOUSE RULES.—Members and staff of the Committee performing authorized travel on official business shall be governed by applicable laws, resolutions, and regulations of the House and of the Committee on House Administration.

RULE 10—FACILITY NAMING

(a) FACILITY NAMING.—No Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facility or property shall be named after any individual by the Committee unless:

(1) Such individual is deceased and was:
   (A) A veteran who (i) was instrumental in the construction or the operation of the facility to be named, or (ii) was a recipient of the Medal of Honor or, as determined by the
Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, otherwise performed military service of an extraordinarily distinguished character;

(B) A Member of the United States House of Representatives or Senate who had a direct association with such facility;

(C) An Administrator of Veterans’ Affairs, a Secretary of Veterans Affairs, a Secretary of Defense or of a service branch, or a military or other Federal civilian official of comparable or higher rank; or

(D) An individual who, as determined by the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, performed outstanding service for veterans.

(2) Each Member of the Congressional delegation representing the State in which the designated facility is located must indicate in writing such Member’s support of the proposal to name such facility after such individual. Evidence of a Member’s support in writing may either be in the form of a letter to the Chairman and Ranking Member or co-sponsorship of legislation proposing to name the particular VA facility in question.

(3) The pertinent State department or chapter of each Congressionally chartered veterans’ organization having a national membership of at least 500,000 must indicate in writing its support of such proposal.

(b) The above criteria for naming a VA facility may be waived by unanimous consent.
The Committee on Veterans’ Affairs conducts its oversight with the help of four Subcommittees: Oversight and Investigations; Economic Opportunity; Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs; and Health. It is expected that oversight of the issues outlined below will be a shared responsibility of both the full Committee and the appropriate subcommittees.

**Subcommittee on Disability and Memorial Affairs**

- **Appeals reform**—The Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA) reviews benefits claims submitted by veterans who disagree with the decision made on their claim by a VA Regional Office. It currently takes over two years for BVA to reach a decision due to the backlog of claims. The process often involves a remand by BVA to the Regional Office for additional information which further lengthens the time to a final decision. The Committee will explore alternative processes and initiatives to the current system.

- **VBA Training**—The Veterans Benefits Administration’s (VBA) overall training strategy continues to result in questionable outcomes. VBA recently spent about $10 million to upgrade the skills of claims examiners. However, Committee staff attended several training sessions and spoke with participants to determine the quality of the training. Participants were nearly unanimous in their judgment that the training was of poor quality, hastily organized and inadequate in nearly all phases. The Committee will review VBA’s training program beginning with initial skills training through advanced and recurrent training.

- **Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims**—The Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC) was established in 1988 and has exclusive jurisdiction over decisions made by the BVA. The Committee will conduct oversight over the operation of the Court, including the current, jurisdiction, and compensation and benefits of CAVC judges sitting on the Court compared to other Article III courts and the Federal judiciary. The Committee will make the comparison to determine whether CAVC judges are adequately compensated relative to their workloads and scope of work.

- **VBMS and VBA IT Systems**—The Committee will review the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS) and other VBA IT systems, to include inquiry into claims, future capabilities and efficiencies, prevention of government waste due to erroneous automatic payments or other system failures, and strategic planning for the paperless environment. VA has spent hundreds of millions of tax dollars to develop an information technology system to process
disability benefit claims. To date, the Committee continues to receive information that the system is frequently inoperative thereby forcing claims processors to use inefficient systems designed decades ago.

- **VBA Fiduciary Program**—The Committee will review the performance of the VBA Fiduciary Program. The program is designed to provide financial security to veterans who have been determined unable to manage their VA benefit payments. Fiduciaries are designated by VA and can be a family member, a close friend, or a professional fiduciary. The review will include oversight of how fiduciaries are appointed, the Department’s compliance with provisions in the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act (Public Law 103–159, 107 Stat. 1536) that can effectively deny veterans in the fiduciary program of the Second Amendment rights as well as fraud associated with the program.

- **Discharge and Benefits Eligibility**—The Subcommittee will review the treatment of character of discharge and subsequent effect on benefits and healthcare. The Committee is aware that many veterans receive types of discharges that deprive them of their VA benefits as well as affect their ability to hold many types of employment. These discharges are sometimes awarded due to a servicemember’s performance under the stresses of PTSD and other mental health-related issues.

- **IDES Program**—the Subcommittee will conduct oversight over the Integrated Disability Examination System (IDES) program collaboration of DoD and VA, to include outcomes and timeliness. IDES is intended to begin the disability claims process while a servicemember is on active duty. The goal is to completely reach a decision on the claim by the time the servicemember is discharged or shortly thereafter.

- **National Cemeteries**—The Subcommittee will continue oversight over National Cemetery Administration (NCA), Arlington National Cemetery (ANC), American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), to include each organization’s mission and operation to include inquiry into matters of unclaimed remains, access, and the methodology for determining veteran satisfaction. Each of the above organizations provides a hallowed resting place for veterans. VA alone operates over 150 National Cemeteries to provide an honorable resting placed for veterans and certain dependents. The Committee will look into a number of issues including poor cemetery maintenance, destruction of and misplaced grave markers, and overall management issues.

**Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity**

- **Effectiveness of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP)**—The Committee continues to be concerned about the effectiveness of the TAP program which is intended to prepare servicemembers for their return to civilian life. The Departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs, and Labor jointly manage and provide content to the five-day course that focuses on skills needed to obtain gainful employment as well as an understanding of the benefits that are available to them from VA and DoL.

- **Performance of the Veterans Employment and Training Service’s State Grant program** including performance of the Disabled
Veterans Outreach Program Specialist/Local Veterans Employment Representative (DVOPS and LVERs) use of employment outcome measures—The DVOPS/LVER program funds state employment service staffs who are dedicated to placing veterans in good-paying jobs. There are significant issues surrounding the inconsistent performance of this program across the states and the outcome measures used to determine performance continue to be inadequate.

- Effectiveness and outcomes of Education and Training Programs for Returning Veterans with a focus in GI Bill processing, implementing the in-state and Frye scholarship provisions in the Choice Act, and the VetSuccess on Campus program—The Post-9/11 GI bill is the most generous education program for veterans since the original WWII GI Bill. Based on the length of service, the program funds up to full tuition and fees at public institutions of higher learning and about $19,000 per year at private institutions as well as a monthly living stipend based on the housing allowance paid to servicemembers at the rank of E–5 and the zip code of the institution. Recent changes to the program have expanded eligibility for surviving dependents and the Committee intends to determine how VA is implementing those changes as well as the performance and value of the success-on-Campus program that stations VA Vocational Rehabilitation staff on approximately 95 campuses.

- Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program. The VR&E program provides education and training benefits for disabled veterans with barriers to employment. The program will fund all costs related to long and short-term education and training as well as immediate job placement services. VR&E also manages the Independent Living (IL) program designed to enable the most severely injured veterans to live as independently as possible. The Committee continues to be concerned about counselor caseloads and outcomes of VR&E programs. The Committee will also conduct oversight over management and overall effectiveness of the VR&E program.

- Center for Veterans Enterprise (CVE)—CVE is responsible for vetting the applications of veteran and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses wanting to participate in the program designed to increase the amount of procurement dollars spent with veteran and disabled veteran-owned small businesses. CVE’s vetting program continues to approve companies that are not qualified for multiple reasons as well as disapprove qualified companies. The Committee will review CVE’s performance and coordinate with the Small Business Committee to determine appropriate alternatives.

- Licensing and Credentialing Issues—The Subcommittee plans to look into efforts by states and other entities to provide appropriate licenses and credentials to qualified veterans whose military training make them eligible for such credentials or licenses. The Department of Defense spends billions of tax dollars to provide servicemembers with the skills needed to complete DoD’s mission. The vast majority of those skills translate well to civilian jobs. Unfortunately, few states recognize and give credit for military training to qualify for state-licensed positions and therefore, the training provided by DoD is essentially wasted. The Committee will review states’ progress toward awarding credit for military training.
Subcommittee on Health

- Implementation of Public Law 113–146, the Veteran Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014—The Committee will thoroughly examine the actions the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has taken to ensure that the law is implemented in accordance with statutorily required timelines and Congressional intent. Last year, Committee oversight and whistleblower revelations exposed systemic access to care delays, widespread data manipulation, and failures of accountability across the VA healthcare system. These issues left some veterans waiting weeks, months, or—in some cases—years for needed VA medical appointments. As such, particular consideration will be given to the status of the Veterans Choice program created by section 101 of the law and other efforts undertaken by VA to ensure veterans receive timely and accessible medical care, whether at VA medical facilities or through non-VA providers. The Committee will begin looking at a longer term solution that fully incorporates non-VA care into the traditional VA care model, either through a restructured PC3 program or other vehicle. The Committee will also closely monitor VA’s efforts to ensure that payments to non-VA providers are both accurate and timely and continue aggressive oversight of VA’s efforts to ensure that all appropriate actions are taken to hold VA leaders and employees accountable for actions that cause harm to veteran patients.

- Mental Health Care Quality, Access, and Staffing—The Committee will continue to conduct rigorous oversight of the provision of mental health care to veteran patients, particularly those at risk of suicide. On average, 22 veterans commit suicide each day—in spite of significant increases in VA’s mental health and suicide prevention budget, staff, and programs over the last several years. In light of this seeming disconnect, the Committee will examine the effectiveness of VA’s mental health and suicide prevention programs in reducing the prevalence of mental health issues and suicide among the veteran population. As part of this effort, the Committee will also examine the quality, availability, and efficacy of the readjustment counseling services provided through VA Vet Centers.

- Women Veterans—The Committee will evaluate actions needed to increase access and overcome barriers to care for women veterans. Women are the fastest growing segment of the veteran population yet research continues to indicate that VA struggles with providing women veterans with appropriate gender-specific and gender-sensitive care in a welcoming environment. In response, the Committee will examine VA’s current practices and actions needed to improve the provision of care to women veterans.

- Medical Recruitment, Retention and Staffing—The Committee will closely examine VA’s staffing, recruitment, and retention plans. VA has identified staffing shortages as a key issue impacting access to care for veteran patients. Recently, VA transmitted a plan to Congress detailing VA’s intent to invest $2.2 billion to hire approximately 9,600 new permanent medical staff. The Committee will closely monitor the use of these funds and the impact staffing increases have on access to and quality of care for veteran patients. In light of the long-history of VA Inspector General and Govern-
ment Accountability Office reports regarding deficiencies in the productivity and staffing measures used by VA medical centers and clinics, the Committee will also assess VA's methodology to identify, prioritize, and correct staffing shortages.

- **Caregiver Support**—The Committee will continue to monitor the implementation of the caregiver assistance programs established in Public Law 111–163, the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act. The Committee recognizes and respects the valuable services caregivers provide—often to the detriment of their own emotional, physical, and financial health—to veterans in need. As such, the Committee will also continue to examine the findings and recommendation made by the Government Accountability Office and the RAND Corporation, among others, regarding how to improve caregiver programs. Notably, the Committee will also evaluate the feasibility of the expansion of the Family Caregiver Program and the requirements VA must meet to responsibly expand it to family caregivers of pre-9/11 veterans. In addition to evaluating the feasibility of the expansion of the Family Caregiver Program to pre-9/11 veterans, the Committee will also examine the feasibility of including “ill” veterans' caregivers in the program.

- **Management of Major Medical Facility Projects and Leases**—The Committee will continue its aggressive oversight of VA's major medical facility construction projects and leases. The Committee will also evaluate actions needed to expedite VA's leasing projects in light of recent changes that require VA to work with the General Services Administration to execute major medical facility leases. Particular consideration will be given to the status of ongoing major medical facility construction projects in Orlando, Florida; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Denver, Colorado; and the twenty-seven major medical facility leases authorized in Public Law 113–146.

- **Organizational and Management Structure**—The Committee will closely examine the current Veterans Health Administration organizational and management structure. Last year, the Committee received testimony from the VA Inspector General that, “. . . there are several organizational issues that impeded the efficient and effective operation of [the Veterans Health Administration] and place patients at-risk of unexpected outcomes.” The Committee will thoroughly evaluate these organizational impediments to care and assess changes that may be needed to improve the provision of timely, quality care to veteran patients. VISN scope, function, and manpower requirements will be examined for possible restructuring. The Committee will also monitor VA's efforts to increase the efficiency of medical facility operations and, ultimately, access to care for veteran patients. In addition, the Committee will also evaluate best practices utilized by private sector health care systems and their applicability to—and inclusion in—the VA healthcare system.

- **Medical and Prosthetic Research Program and Centers of Excellence**—The Committee will closely examine VA's medical and prosthetic research program. VA's Office of Research and Development (ORD) conducts an extensive research program that is tasked with conducting research to advance the health care provided by VA and to the nation. Outside of ORD, VA also operates a number
of Centers of Excellence across the country that conduct research on specific aspects of VA health care. The Committee will aggressively oversee the totality of VA's research programs and ensure that best practices are conducted and disseminated throughout the country.

• Prosthetic Care and Procurement—The Committee will continue to closely monitor and assess the provision of care to veterans requiring prosthetic devices. In 2012, VA undertook an initiative to reform prosthetics procurement practices. Under the new system, purchasing authority for prosthetics equipment above $3,000 was transferred from prosthetics purchasing agents to contracting specialists. The Committee remains concerned that these reforms have resulted in lengthy and unacceptable delays in care for veterans in need. As such, the Committee will also examine the continuing impacts of prosthetic procurement reform and actions needed to ensure veterans—particularly those requiring high-level prosthetic devices—receive timely and responsive prosthetic care.

• Pain Management—The Committee will examine the increasing use of prescription medications to treat veterans experiencing acute and chronic pain. Data suggests that veterans are a particularly high-risk population for prescription misuse, substance use disorder, accidental overdose, accidents, and/or self-inflicted injury. In particular, questions were raised in the 113th Congress regarding the need for VA to provide a “higher consent” form to veterans regarding medication side effects and offering them alternative therapies to medications in order to manage their pain. Accordingly, the Committee will examine actions needed to improve pain management across the VA health care system.

• VA Partnerships with Community Organizations—The Committee will continue to examine the role of non-profit, faith-based, and community providers in helping veterans transitioning from active duty to civilian life and/or struggling with health or other issues. Operating outside the constraints of a Federal bureaucracy, faith-based, non-profit, community, and other nongovernmental organizations are uniquely situated to assist VA in breaking down identified barriers to care for veterans in need. Indeed, these groups are already playing a pivotal role in caring for the veterans in communities across the country every day, providing a range of services including transportation, housing, mental health counseling, crisis intervention services, scholarships, financial assistance, and workforce reintegration programs. The Committee will focus on VA’s relationship with these critical community partners and further actions needed to increase and improve meaningful and effective working relationships between them and VA.

• Homeless Veterans—The Committee will thoroughly examine the actions VA has taken to provide homeless and at-risk veterans with appropriate housing, healthcare, and training and employment opportunities. In November 2009, then-VA Secretary Shinseki announced a Five-Year Plan to End Veteran Homelessness. Since this Plan was implemented in 2010, veteran homelessness has decreased by 33 percent and VA’s total medical care obligations for homeless veterans has increased to roughly $6 billion, more than ten percent of VA’s entire medical care budget. In light of the pending conclusion of the Plan and the considerable investments that
have been made in support of it, the Committee will closely assess the status and sustainability of the progress made to-date to eradicate veteran homelessness. Importantly, the Committee will also work to ensure that VA’s efforts regarding homeless veterans are focused not just on housing but also on the elimination of the factors underlying homelessness.

- Toxic Exposures—The Committee will examine VA’s efforts to improve the research and treatment available to veterans who may have been exposed to toxic chemicals during their military service. Negative health effects as a result of exposure to toxic chemicals can have lifelong and generational effects on veterans and their families. In recognition of this, the Committee will assess the actions VA has taken in response to verified or suspected toxic exposure incidents and evaluate actions still needed to improve services to veterans and family members.

- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Long Term Rehabilitation—The Committee will continue to examine the treatment provided to veterans with TBI. Identifying and implementing innovative treatment techniques to aid these veterans in their recovery has been a long-standing Committee priority. Particular consideration will be provided to overseeing the ongoing community-based brain injury residential rehabilitative care pilot program. Anecdotal evidence seems to indicate that veterans involved in the pilot program are satisfied with it and appear to experience functional gains as a result of the services they receive. In support of these initial findings, the Committee will continue to oversee the pilot as well as assess actions needed to enhance rehabilitation, quality of life, and community integration for veterans with TBI.

- Complementary and Alternative Medicine—The Committee will assess the availability, use, and efficacy of complementary and alternative medicine to treat veterans in need. Anecdotal evidence from veterans in complementary and alternative medicine programs indicates positive health effects and, increasingly, veterans are advocating for a variety of treatment options in addition to traditional medicine. As such, the Committee will examine how VA is incorporating complementary and alternative medicine into VA medical facilities and monitoring the effectiveness of complementary and alternative treatments for veterans with physical and mental health issues.

- Veterans Courts—The Committee will assess VA’s Veterans Justice Outreach programs and, in particular, the role of veterans courts. Veterans with mental health, substance use, and other needs that are left untreated can sometimes become involved with the criminal justice system. The Committee will evaluate the use and effectiveness of veterans courts in assisting veterans with mental health and other needs access treatment and avoid unnecessary criminalization and incarceration.

- Pharmacy Issues—The Committee will examine ongoing issues with VA’s pharmacy practices and formulary. The Committee will also evaluate the process through veterans are prescribed non-formulary medications, as required, and the process through which new medications are vetted and, ultimately, provided to veteran patients. The Committee will also oversee the use and effectiveness of VA’s consolidated mail outpatient pharmacy.
• Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA)—CHAMPVA provides health benefits to spouses and children of veterans who are disabled or who died from a service-connected disability. When the Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111–148) was passed in 2010, children of these veterans were left out of the provisions allowing dependents to stay on their parents’ insurance until age 26. However, within the military health program TRICARE, dependents are allowed to stay until 26, creating a potential inequity for CHAMPVA dependents. The Committee will examine the feasibility and advisability of extending the CHAMPVA program to age 26 for those who are eligible.

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

• VA Procurement and Acquisition—The VA procurement and acquisition process has been a recurring problem area for the VA. The Committee will look into numerous allegations of inappropriate and inefficient procurement practices at the VA and work toward identifying concrete steps that VA can take to improve the procurement and acquisition process.

• VA Major Construction—The Committee will be undertaking a comprehensive investigation and review of VA's Major Construction program. VA's current practices may increase costs and delays in constructing facilities, as most recently evidenced at the Denver VA Medical Center project, a project where costs have skyrocketed and estimates regarding completion have stretched into the future.

• VA Claims Process—The Committee will be looking into the VA claims process to ensure that claims are handled quickly and fairly, including claims that are handled under an expedited process that may cut important due process corners.

• VA Health Care Quality and Timeliness—The Committee will continue oversight over VA health care quality concerns and issues involving delays and access. The Committee is especially concerned over staffing shortages and the effects such shortages have on health care access.

• VA Land Use Agreements—The Committee will review allegations of wasteful and improper VA land use lease agreements that may have an effect on health care quality and timeliness and waste taxpayer dollars.

• Whistleblower Retaliation—The Committee is concerned over continued allegations regarding VA retaliation against whistleblowers. The Committee will look closely into whistleblower retaliation and whether recent statements regarding zero tolerance for retaliation are being effectively followed throughout the VA system.

• VA Mental Health Care—The Committee will be reviewing the effectiveness and adequacy of VA’s mental health efforts, including its management of psychiatric medications and suicide prevention efforts that may not provide appropriate access to care to veterans seeking mental health care. The Committee will also review the use and misuse of opioids in the treatment of mental health issues involving PTSD, TBI, and substance use addictions.

• VA Information Technology—The Committee will continue its vigorous oversight over the VA's information technology program, including the effectiveness of VA's cybersecurity efforts. The Com-
mittee will also look into VA’s efforts to replace the scheduling software currently used by the Veterans Health Administration as well as efforts by VA and the Department of Defense to put into place interoperable and integrated electronic health records.
MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS’ AFFAIRS

ONE HUNDRED AND FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS’ AFFAIRS

(Ratio: 14–10)

JEFF MILLER, Florida, Chairman

DOUG LAMBORN, Colorado
GUS BILIRAKIS, Florida, Vice Chairman
DAVID P. ROE, Tennessee
DAN BENISHEK, Michigan
TIM HUELSKAMP, Kansas
MIKE COFFMAN, Colorado
BRAD WENSTRUP, Ohio
JACKIE WALORSKI, Indiana
RALPH ABRAHAM, Louisiana
LEE ZELDIN, New York
RYAN COSTELLO, Pennsylvania
AUMUA AMATA COLEMAN RADEWAGEN, America Samoa
MIKE BOST, Illinois

MARK TAKANO, California, Acting Ranking Member (19 July 2016–Present)
CORRINE BROWN, Florida, Ranking Member (Jan 2015–18 July 2016)
JULIA BROWNLEY, California
DINA TITUS, Nevada
RAUL RUIZ, California
ANN KUSTER, New Hampshire
BETO O’ROURKE, Texas
KATHLEEN RICE, New York
TIM WALZ, Minnesota
JERRY McNERNEY, California

Jonathan A. Towers, Majority Staff Director
Don Phillips, Democratic Staff Director

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON DISABILITY ASSISTANCE AND MEMORIAL AFFAIRS

(Ratio: 5–3)

RALPH ABRAHAM, Louisiana, Chairman

DOUG LAMBORN, Colorado
LEE ZELDIN, New York
RYAN COSTELLO, Pennsylvania
MIKE BOST, Illinois

DINA TITUS, Nevada, Ranking Member
JULIA BROWNLEY, California
RAUL RUIZ, California

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

(Ratio: 5–4)

BRAD WENSTRUP, Ohio, Chairman

LEE ZELDIN, New York
RYAN COSTELLO, Pennsylvania
AUMUA AMATA COLEMAN RADEWAGEN, America Samoa
MIKE BOST, Illinois

MARK TAKANO, California, Ranking Member
DINA TITUS, Nevada
KATHLEEN RICE, New York
JERRY McNERNEY, California

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH

(Ratio: 7–5)

(21)
COMMITTEE STAFF

MAJORITY STAFF

Jonathan A. Towers
Staff Director
Michael F. Brinck
Deputy Staff Director

Brandt Anderson, Research Assistant, Subcommittee on Health (January 2015–May 2015)
Kelsey Baron, Professional Staff Member, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity
Kiley Bruehman (September 2015–Present)
Tamara Bonzanto, Healthcare Investigator (June 2015–Present)
Curt Cashour, Communications Director
Amy Centanni, Investigative Counsel, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
Jonathan A. Clark, Staff Director, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity
Cecilia Daly, Professional Staff Member, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and
Memorial Affairs (April 2015–Present)
Hillary Dickinson, Research Assistant, Subcommittee on Health (August 2015–Present)
Brenda N. Dotson, Financial Administrator
Jessica Eggimann, Chief Clerk, Legislative Coordinator, Office Manager
Samantha E. Gonzalez, Senior Professional Staff Member
Eric E. Hannel, Staff Director, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations (January
2015–October 2016)
Christine Hill, Staff Director, Subcommittee on Health
Jon Hodnette, Investigative Counsel, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations (January
2015–October 2016)—Staff Director (November 2016–Present)
Christina Mandreucci, Staff Assistant (January 2015–August 2015)
Tim Mantegna, Digital Manager & Press Assistant (February 2015–February 2016)
William Mallison, Contract Investigator, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
(July 2015–Present)
Caroline Ponsetti, Digital Manager & Press Assistant (February 2016–Present)
Harold Rees, Senior Investigative Counsel, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
(January 2015–November 2016)
Rory Riley, Staff Director, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs
(January 2015–October 2015)
Lauren Rogan, Professional Staff Member and Counsel, Subcommittee on Disability
Assistance and Memorial Affairs (January 2015–February 2015)
Michael Siegel, Digital Manager (January 2015–February 2015)
Alyssa Schroeder, Research Assistant, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial
Affairs (November 2015–Present)
Ian Smith, Research Assistant, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs
(January 2015–February 2015)
Maria Tripplaar, Staff Director and Counsel, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and
Memorial Affairs (October 2015–Present)
John Vick, Research Assistant, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs
(April 2015–October 2015)

MINORITY STAFF

Don Phillips
Staff Director

Megan Bland, Executive Assistant (January 2015–November 2015)
Carolyn Blaydes, Senior Legislative Assistant
Justin Brown, Staff Director, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs
(January 2015–September 2016)
Andrea Donelson, Executive Assistant and New Media Manager (November 2015–Present)
Lee Footer, Professional Staff Member
Carol S. Murray, Office Manager and Legislative Coordinator
Grace Rodden, Investigative Counsel (May 2015–Present)
David Simon, Communications Director (January 2015–July 2015)
Erin Snow, Staff Director, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity (April 2015–Present)
David Tucker, Deputy Staff Director and Chief Counsel (January 2015–August 2016)
Saxi Verveeris, Senior Legislative Assistant (January 2015–July 2016)
Cathleen C. Wibleno, Staff Director, Subcommittee on Health
LEGISLATIVE AND OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES OF THE FULL COMMITTEE

From January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2016 of the First and Second Sessions of the 114th Congress, 452 bills were referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The Committee reported to the House or was discharged from further consideration of 38 measures. Sixteen measures regarding matters within the Committee’s jurisdiction were enacted into law.

The following is a summary of the legislative and oversight activities of the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2016 of the 114th Congress.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS’ AFFAIRS

(Ratio: 14–10)

JEFF MILLER, Florida, Chairman
DOUG LAMBORN, Colorado
GUS BILIRAKIS, Florida, Vice Chairman
DAVID P. ROE, Tennessee
DAN BENISHEK, Michigan
TIM HUELSKAMP, Kansas
MIKE COFFMAN, Colorado
BRAD WENSTRUP, Ohio
JACKIE WALORSKI, Indiana
RALPH ABRAHAM, Louisiana
LEE ZELDIN, New York
RYAN COSTELLO, Pennsylvania
AUMUA AMATA COLEMAN RADEWAGEN, America Samoa
MIKE BOST, Illinois

MARK TAKANO, California, Acting Ranking Member (19 July 2016–Present)
CORRINE BROWN, Florida, Ranking Member (Jan 2015–18 July 2016)
JULIA BROWNLEY, California
DINA TITUS, Nevada
RAUL RUIZ, California
ANN KUSTER, New Hampshire
BETO O’ROURKE, Texas
KATHLEEN RICE, New York
TIM WALZ, Minnesota
JERRY McNERNEY, California
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS’ AFFAIRS
FULL COMMITTEE LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

First Session

VETERANS IDENTIFICATION CARD ACT 2015
(H.R. 91)

Summary

H.R. 91, the Veteran’s Identification Card Act of 2015, directs the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to issue a veteran’s identification card to a requesting veteran who is neither entitled to military retired pay nor enrolled in the VA system of patient enrollment.

The bill also requires such card, among other things, to: (1) display the veteran’s name and photograph, and (2) serve as proof that the veteran has a DD–214 form or other official document in his or her military personnel file that describes the veteran’s military service. The bill also directs VA to charge a card fee and states that such card shall not serve as proof of entitlement to any benefits.

Legislative History

H.R. 91 was introduced by Representative Vern Buchanan on January 6, 2015, and referred to the Committee on Veterans Affairs. H.R. 91 had 82 cosponsors.

On May 18, 2015, the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 91, as amended, by 402 Yeas and 0 Nays.

On June 22, 2015, H.R. 91 passed the Senate with an amendment by Unanimous Consent.

On July 7, 2015, the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and agree to the Senate amendment by 411 Yeas and 0 Nays.

On July 9, 2015, H.R. 91 was presented to the President.

On July 20, 2015, H.R. 91 was signed by the President and became Public Law No. 114–31.

CLAY HUNT SAV ACT
(H.R. 203)

Summary

H.R. 203, the Clay Hunt SAV Act, requires the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) to: (1) arrange for an independent third party evaluation, to be conducted by September 30, 2018, and each fiscal year thereafter, of the VA’s mental health care and suicide prevention programs; and (2) submit a report to Congress, by December 1, 2018, and each year thereafter, containing the most recent evaluations not yet submitted to Congress and any recommendations the Secretary considers appropriate.

H.R. 203 directs the Secretary to submit interim reports to Congress by September 30, 2016, and September 30, 2017, on the VA’s mental health care and suicide prevention programs.

H.R. 203 directs the Secretary to survey the VA’s websites and information resources to publish a website that serves as a central-
ized source to provide veterans with information, updated at least once every 90 days, regarding the VA’s mental health care services.

H.R. 203 requires the Secretary to carry out a three-year pilot program to repay the education loans relating to psychiatric medicine that are incurred by individuals who: are eligible to practice psychiatric medicine in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) or are enrolled in the final year of a residency program leading to a specialty qualification in psychiatric medicine; demonstrate a commitment to a long-term career as a psychiatrist in the VHA; and agree to a period of two or more years of obligated service with the VHA in the field of psychiatric medicine, as determined by the Secretary.

H.R. 203 limits the loan repayment to no more than $30,000 for each year an individual performs such obligated service, as determined by the Secretary.

H.R. 203 directs the Secretary to submit interim and final reports to Congress on such pilot program.

H.R. 203 directs the Secretary to establish a three-year pilot program at not less than five Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) to assist veterans transitioning from active duty and to improve the access of veterans to mental health services. Requires the pilot program at each VISN to include: (1) a community oriented veteran peer support network carried out in partnership with an entity that has experience in peer support programs, and (2) a community outreach team for each medical center in such VISN.

H.R. 203 directs the Secretary to submit interim and final reports to Congress on such pilot program.

H.R. 203 authorizes the Secretary to collaborate with nonprofit mental health organizations to prevent suicide among veterans. Requires the Secretary and any such organization to exchange training sessions and best practices.

H.R. 203 directs the Secretary to select a VA Director of Suicide Prevention Coordination to undertake any collaboration with nonprofit mental health organizations.

H.R. 203 extends for one year combat veterans’ eligibility for VA hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care for illnesses that have not been medically proven to be attributable to their service, provided they: (1) were discharged or released from active duty between January 1, 2009, and January 1, 2011, and (2) did not enroll to receive such care during the five-year period of eligibility following their discharge.

H.R. 203 prohibits the authorization of any additional appropriations to carry out this Act’s provisions.

Legislative History

H.R. 203 was introduced by Representative Timothy Walz on January 7, 2015, and referred to the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee. The bill had 39 cosponsors, 11 of which were original cosponsors.

On January 12, 2015, the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill agreed to by 403 Yeas and 0 Nays.

On January 21, 2015, H.R. 203 was reported by Senator Isakson without amendment and without a written report.
On February 3, 2015, H.R. 203 passed the Senate without amendment by 99 Yeas and 0 Nays.

On February 11, 2015, H.R. 203 was presented to the President.

On February 12, 2015, H.R. 203 was signed by the President and became Public Law No: 114–2.

On April 23, 2015, Senator Isakson from the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs filed the written report, No. 114–34.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS’ AFFAIRS BUDGET PLANNING REFORM ACT OF 2015

(H.R. 216)

Summary

H.R. 216, the Department of Veterans’ Affairs Budget Planning Reform Act of 2015, directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) to submit annually to Congress a Future-Years Veterans Program (Program) reflecting estimated expenditures and proposed appropriations included in the budget for that fiscal year.

H.R. 216 requires the Program to: (1) set forth a five-year VA plan to address the U.S. commitment to veterans and the resources necessary to meet that commitment; (2) be included in VA's annual budget submission to the Congress, starting with the FY2020 budget submission; and (3) be published on a publicly available VA website.

H.R. 216 requires the Secretary, in 2019 and quadrennially thereafter, to conduct a review of the strategy for meeting such commitment and resources requirement (Quadrennial Veterans Review) which shall include a comprehensive examination of U.S. policies and strategies for veterans, including recommendations regarding the long-term strategy and priorities for veterans programs, services, and benefits, and guidance on VA programs, assets, budget, and policies.

H.R. 216 requires each Review to be coordinated with the Program.

H.R. 216 directs the Secretary to: (1) report to Congress regarding each Review, and (2) publish each Review on a publicly available VA website.

H.R. 216 directs the Secretary to establish an Independent Veterans Review Panel for each year in which a Review is conducted which shall review the process by which the review is formulated and submit a related report to Congress.

H.R. 216 directs the Secretary to provide annually to the appropriate VA officials written policy guidance for the preparation and review of the planning and program recommendations and budget proposals of the VA elements of such officials.

H.R. 216 directs the Secretary to designate a Chief Strategy Officer to: (1) advise the Secretary on long-range VA strategy and implications, and (2) develop and execute the Program.

H.R. 216 states that: (1) no additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act, and (2) this Act shall be carried out using funds otherwise available to VA.
Legislative History

H.R. 216 was introduced by Representative Corrine Brown on January 8, 2015, and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill was originally cosponsored by Chairman Jeff Miller, and had 3 additional cosponsors.

On January 27, 2015, the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs held a legislative hearing on H.R. 216, and received testimony from the following witnesses: the Honorable Alan Grayson, Member of Congress, U.S. House of Representatives, 9th Congressional District, Florida; Mr. David R. McLenachen, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Disability Assistance, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. McLenachen was accompanied by: Dr. Rajiv Jain, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Patient Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Susan Sullivan, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, Office of Policy and Planning, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Kim McLeod, Counsel, Office of General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Joseph A. Violante, National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Aleks Morosky, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Mr. Zachary Hearn, Deputy Director—Claims of the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, The American Legion; and Mr. Blake Ortner, Deputy Government Relations Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America.

On February 12, 2015, the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs met in an open session and an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 216 was offered by Ranking Member Brown of Florida and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 216, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote. The Committee Report was filed on March 23, 2015 (H. Rept. 114–48).

On March 24, 2015, the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended by 420 Yeas and 0 Nays.

On March 25, 2015, H.R. 216 was received in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

**TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO RECOUP Bonuses and Awards PAID TO EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

(H.R. 280)

Summary

H.R. 280, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to recoup bonuses and awards paid to employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to issue an order directing a VA employee to repay the amount, or a portion of the amount, of an award or bonus paid to the employee if: (1) the VA determines that such repayment is appropriate, and (2) the employee is afforded notice and an opportunity for a hearing conducted by another federal agency. H.R. 280 makes such repayment decisions final and unreviewable.

H.R. 280 makes this Act applicable to awards or bonuses paid before, on, or after the date of this Act’s enactment.


Legislative History

H.R. 280 was introduced by Chairman Jeff Miller on January 12, 2015, and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs in addition to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. The bill had 9 additional cosponsors.

On January 27, 2015, the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs held a legislative hearing on H.R. 280, and received testimony from the following witnesses: the Honorable Alan Grayson, Member of Congress, U.S. House of Representatives, 9th Congressional District, Florida; Mr. David R. McLenachen, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Disability Assistance, Veterans Benefits Administration U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. McLenachen was accompanied by: Dr. Rajiv Jain, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Patient Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Susan Sullivan, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, Office of Policy and Planning, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Kim McLeod, Counsel, Office of General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Joseph A. Violante, National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Aleks Morosky, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Mr. Zachary Hearn, Deputy Director—Claims of the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, The American Legion; and Mr. Blake Ortner, Deputy Government Relations Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America.

On February 12, 2015 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs met in an open session and an amendment in the nature of a substitute H.R. 280 was offered by Chairman Miller of Florida and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 280, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote. The Committee Report was filed on March 2, 2015, and discharged from the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (H. Rept. 114–32).

On March 2, 2015, the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended, by voice vote.

On March 3, 2015, H.R. 280 was received in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

LONG-TERM CARE VETERANS CHOICE ACT

(H.R. 294)

Summary

H.R. 294, Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act, authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), during the three-year period beginning on October 1, 2015, at the request of a veteran for whom the VA is required to provide nursing home care, to place such veteran in a medical foster home that meets VA standards. Requires such veteran to agree, as a condition of such placement, to accept VA home health services.

H.R. 294 limits the number of veterans placed in a medical foster home that may have their care covered at the expense of the United States to 900.

H.R. 294 amends the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to reduce the aggregate amount of awards and
bonuses that may be paid by the VA in each of FY2015–FY2018 to $300 million.

**Legislative History**

H.R. 294 was introduced by Chairman Jeff Miller on January 13, 2015, and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had 2 additional cosponsors.

On January 27, 2015, the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs held a legislative hearing on H.R. 294, and received testimony from the following witnesses: the Honorable Alan Grayson, Member of Congress, U.S. House of Representatives, 9th Congressional District, Florida; Mr. David R. McLenachen, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Disability Assistance, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. McLenachen was accompanied by: Dr. Rajiv Jain, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Patient Services Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Susan Sullivan, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, Office of Policy and Planning, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Kim McLeod, Counsel, Office of General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Joseph A. Violante, National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Aleks Morosky, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Mr. Zachary Hearn, Deputy Director for Claims of the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, The American Legion; and Mr. Blake Ortner, Deputy Government Relations Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America.

On February 12, 2015 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs met in open session and an amendment in the nature of a substitute, H.R. 294, was offered by Chairman Miller of Florida and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 294, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote. The Committee Report was filed on March 2, 2015 (H. Rept. 114–35).

On March 2, 2015, the House agreed on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended, by 405 Yeas and 0 Nays.

On March 2, 2015, H.R. 294 was received in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

**HOMELESS VETERANS’ REINTEGRATION PROGRAMS REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2015**

(H.R. 474)

**Summary**

H.R. 474, Homeless Veterans Reintegration Programs Reauthorization Act of 2015, extends through FY2020 the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) homeless veterans reintegration programs. (Those programs provide job training, counseling, and placement services to homeless veterans to expedite their reintegration into the labor force.)

H.R. 474 makes eligible for participation in those programs: (1) homeless veterans, (2) veterans who are participating in the VA supported housing program for which rental assistance is provided under the United States Housing Act of 1937, and (3) veterans who are transitioning from being incarcerated.
Legislative History

H.R. 474 was introduced by Representative Brad Wenstrup on January 22, 2015, and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The bill had 4 additional cosponsors.

On March 24, 2015 the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session and held a legislative hearing on H.R. 474 and received testimony from the following witnesses: the Honorable Patrick Murphy, U.S. House of Representatives, 18th Congressional District, Florida; Mr. Aleks Morosky, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Mr. Christopher Neiweem, Legislative Associate, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; Mr. Steve Gonzalez, Assistant Director, National Veteran Employment & Education Division, The American Legion; Dr. Joseph W. Wescott, President, National Association of State Approving Agencies; MG Robert M. Worley II USAF (Ret.), Director, Education Service, Veterans Benefit Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Mr. Tom Leney, Executive Director, Small and Veteran Business Programs, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Ms. Kimberly McLeod, Deputy Assistant General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Mr. John Brizzi, Deputy Assistant General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Teresa W. Gerton, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Veterans' Employment and Training Service, U.S. Department of Labor.

On April 15, 2015, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session and ordered H.R. 474 to be favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On May 18, 2015, the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 474 by voice vote.

On May 19, 2015, H.R. 474 was received in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans Affairs.

VETERANS’ COMPENSATION COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT ACT OF 2015
(H.R. 675)

Summary

H.R. 675, Veterans’ Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2015, directs the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to increase, as of November 30, 2015, the rates of: veterans’ disability compensation, additional compensation for dependents, wartime disability compensation, the clothing allowance for certain disabled veterans, and dependency and indemnity compensation for surviving spouses and children. Each such increase shall be the same percentage as the benefits increase provided under title II (Old Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance) (OASDI) of the Social Security Act, as of December 1, 2015. The VA shall publish such adjusted rates in the Federal Register.

Legislative History

H.R. 675 was introduced by Representative Ralph Abraham on February 3, 2015, and referred to the House Committee on Vet-
erans' Affairs. The bill had 5 cosponsors, 1 of which was an original cosponsor.

On April 14, 2015 the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a legislative hearing on H.R. 675 and received testimony from the following witnesses: The Honorable Chellie Pingree, U.S. House of Representatives; Mr. David R. McLenachen, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Disability Assistance, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. McLenachen was accompanied by Ms. Laura H. Eskenazi, Executive-in-Charge and Vice Chairman, Board of Veterans' Appeals, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. David J. Barrans, Assistant General Counsel, Office of General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Zachary Hearn, Deputy Director for Claims, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Mr. Blake C. Ortner, Deputy Government Relations Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Mr. Paul R. Varela, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Ronald B. Abrams, Joint Executive Director, National Veterans Legal Services Program; Mr. Kenneth M. Carpenter, Founding Member, National Organization of Veterans' Advocates.

On May 14, 2015, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs met in open session and ordered H.R. 675 to favorably be forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On May 21, 2015, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 675 was offered by Rep. Ralph Abraham of Louisiana and was adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 675 was offered by Rep. Ryan Costello of Pennsylvania and was adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. H.R. 675, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote. The Committee Report was filed on July 16, 2015 (H. Rept. 114–206).

On July 28, 2015, the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended, by 409 Yeas and 0 Nays.

On July 29, 2015, H.R. 675 was received in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

ENSURING VA EMPLOYEE ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

(H.R. 1038)

Summary

H.R. 1038, Ensuring VA Employee Accountability Act, would require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to retain a copy of any reprimand or admonishment received by a VA employee in the employee’s permanent record.

Legislative History

H.R. 1038 was introduced by Representative Ryan Costello on February 24, 2015 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The bill had no cosponsors.

On March 24, 2015, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a legislative hearing on H.R. 1038, and received testimony from the following witnesses: the Honorable Patrick Murphy, U.S.
On April 15, 2015, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session and ordered H.R. 1038 to be favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On May 18, 2015, the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 1038 by voice vote.

On May 19, 2015, H.R. 1038 was received by the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

SERVICE DISABLED VETERAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESS RELIEF ACT

(H.R. 1313)

Summary

H.R. 1313, Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business Relief Act, would treat the surviving spouse of a service-disabled veteran who acquires the ownership interest in a small business of the deceased veteran as such veteran for purposes of eligibility for VA service-disabled small business contracting goals and preferences for: (1) 10 years after the veteran’s death if such veteran was either 100% disabled or died from a service-connected disability, or (2) 3 years after such death if the veteran was less than 100% disabled and did not die from a service-connected disability.

Legislative History

H.R. 1313 was introduced by Representative Jerry McNerney on March 4, 2015 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had no cosponsors.

On March 24, 2015 the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a legislative hearing on H.R. 1313 and received testimony from the following witnesses: the Honorable Patrick Murphy, U.S. House of Representatives, 18th Congressional District, Florida; Mr. Aleks Morosky, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Mr. Christopher Neiweem, Legislative Associate, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; Mr. Steve Gonzalez, Assistant Director, National Veteran Employment & Education Division, The American Legion; Dr. Joseph W. Wescott, President, National Association of State Approving Agencies; MG Robert M. Worley II USAF (Ret.), Director, Education Service, Veterans Benefit Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Mr. Tom Leney, Executive Director, Small and Veteran Business Programs, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Ms. Kimberly McLeod, Deputy Assistant General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Ms. Teresa W. Gerton, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Veterans’ Employment and Training Service, U.S. Department of Labor.

On April 15, 2015, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session and ordered H.R. 1038 to be favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On May 18, 2015, the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 1038 by voice vote.

On May 19, 2015, H.R. 1038 was received by the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

SERVICE DISABLED VETERAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESS RELIEF ACT

(H.R. 1313)

Summary

H.R. 1313, Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business Relief Act, would treat the surviving spouse of a service-disabled veteran who acquires the ownership interest in a small business of the deceased veteran as such veteran for purposes of eligibility for VA service-disabled small business contracting goals and preferences for: (1) 10 years after the veteran’s death if such veteran was either 100% disabled or died from a service-connected disability, or (2) 3 years after such death if the veteran was less than 100% disabled and did not die from a service-connected disability.

Legislative History

H.R. 1313 was introduced by Representative Jerry McNerney on March 4, 2015 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had no cosponsors.

On March 24, 2015 the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a legislative hearing on H.R. 1313 and received testimony from the following witnesses: the Honorable Patrick Murphy, U.S. House of Representatives, 18th Congressional District, Florida; Mr. Aleks Morosky, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Mr. Christopher Neiweem, Legislative Associate, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; Mr. Steve Gonzalez, Assistant Director, National Veteran Employment & Education Division, The American Legion; Dr. Joseph W. Wescott, President, National Association of State Approving Agencies; MG Robert M. Worley II USAF (Ret.), Director, Edu-
cation Service, Veterans Benefit Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Mr. Tom Leney, Executive Director, Small and Veteran Business Programs, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Ms. Kimberly McLeod, Deputy Assistant General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Mr. John Brizzi, Deputy Assistant General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Teresa W. Gerton, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Veterans’ Employment and Training Service, U.S. Department of Labor.

On April 15, 2015 the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in an open session and ordered H.R. 1313 to favorably be forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On May 18, 2015, the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 1313 by 403 Yeas and 0 Nays.

On May 19, 2015, H.R. 1313 was received in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

DIGNIFIED INTERMENT OF OUR VETERANS ACT OF 2015

(H.R. 1338)

Summary

H.R. 1338, Dignified Interment of our Veterans Act of 2015, would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to study and report to Congress on matters relating to the interring of veterans’ unclaimed remains in national cemeteries under the control of the National Cemetery Administration, including: the scope of the issues relating to veterans’ unclaimed remains, including the estimated number of such remains; the effectiveness of VA procedures for working with persons or entities having custody of unclaimed remains to facilitate their interment in such cemeteries; state and local laws that affect the Secretary’s ability to inter unclaimed veterans’ remains in such cemeteries; and recommendations for appropriate legislative or administrative action.

H.R. 1338 would ensure the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 is amended to limit FY2016 awards and bonuses to $2 million for VA employees who are members of the Senior Executive Service.

Legislative History

H.R. 1338 was introduced by Representative Bill Shuster on March 6, 2015, and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had 98 cosponsors, 21 of which were original cosponsors.

On June 24, 2015, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a legislative hearing on H.R. 1338 and received testimony from the following witnesses: The Honorable Bill Johnson, U.S. House of Representatives; Mr. David R. McLenachen, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Disability Assistance Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs who was accompanied by Mr. Matthew Sullivan, Deputy Under Secretary for Finance and Planning, and CFO National Cemetery Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and was Mr. David Barrans, Assistant General Counsel Office of General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Zachary
Hearn, Deputy Director for Claims, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Mr. Paul R. Varela, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Aleks Morosky, Deputy Director National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Ms. Diane Zumatto, National Legislative Director, AMVETS; Mr. Chris Neiweem, Legislative Associate, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America.

On July 9, 2015 the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs met in open session and ordered H.R. 1338 to be favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On September 17, 2015 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs met in open session and an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1338 was offered by Rep. Abraham of Louisiana and was adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. H.R. 1338, as amended passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably reported to the Full House by voice vote. The Committee Report was filed on October 26, 2015 (H. Rept. 114–312).

On November 16, 2015, the House agreed to the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 1338, as amended, by 409 Yeas and 0 Nays.

On November 17, 2015, H.R. 1338 was received by the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

BOOSTING RATES OF AMERICAN VETERAN EMPLOYMENT ACT
(H.R. 1382)

Summary

H.R. 1382, Boosting Rates of American Veteran Employment Act, would authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), in awarding a contract or task order for the procurement of goods or services, to give preference to offerors based on the percentage of the offeror’s full-time employees who are veterans.

H.R. 1382 would require the debarment from contracting with the VA for not less than five years of any offeror determined to have willfully and intentionally misrepresented the veteran status of its employees.

Legislative History

H.R. 1382 was introduced by Representative Kathleen Rice on March 16, 2015 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had 8 cosponsors, 5 of which were original cosponsors.

On March 24, 2015 the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a legislative hearing on H.R. 1382 and received testimony from the following witnesses: the Honorable Patrick Murphy, U.S. House of Representatives, 18th Congressional District, Florida; Mr. Aleks Morosky, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Mr. Christopher Neiweem, Legislative Associate, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; Mr. Steve Gonzalez, Assistant Director, National Veteran Employment & Education Division, The American Legion; Dr. Joseph W. Wescott, President, National Association of State Approving Agencies; MG Robert M. Worley II USAF (Ret.), Director, Education Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Mr. Tom Leney, Executive Director, Small and Veteran Business Programs, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Ms. Kimberly McLeod, Deputy Assistant General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Mr. John Brizzi, Deputy Assistant General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Teresa W. Gerton, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Veterans’ Employment and Training Service, U.S. Department of Labor.

On April 15, 2015, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session and an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1382 was offered by Representative Kathleen Rice of New York and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 1382, as amended passed the EO Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On May 18, 2015, the House agreed on a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 1382 by 404 Yeas and 0 Nays.

On May 19, 2015, H.R. 1382 was received by the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

HONOR AMERICA’S GUARD-RESERVE RETIREES ACT
(H.R. 1384)

Summary

H.R. 1384, Honor America’s Guard-Reserve Retirees Act, would establish that any person who is entitled to retired pay for nonregular (reserve) service or who, but for age, would be so entitled shall be honored as a veteran. A person shall not be entitled to any benefit by reason of such recognition.

Legislative History

H.R. 1384 was introduced by Representative Timothy Walz on March 16, 2015 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had 132 cosponsors, 30 of which were original cosponsors.

On June 24, 2015, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a legislative hearing on H.R. 1384 and received testimony from the following witnesses: The Honorable Bill Johnson, U.S. House of Representatives; Mr. David R. McLenachen, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Disability Assistance, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, who was accompanied by Mr. Matthew Sullivan, Deputy Under Secretary for Finance and Planning, and CFO National Cemetery Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Mr. David Barrans, Assistant General Counsel, Office of General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Zachary Hearn, Deputy Director for Claims, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Mr. Paul R. Varela, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Aleks Morosky, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Ms. Diane Zumatto, National Legislative Director, AMVETS; Mr. Chris Neiweem, Legislative Associate, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America.
On July 9, 2015, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs met in open session and ordered H.R. 1384 to be favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote. On September 17, 2015, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs met in open session and H.R. 1384 passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote. The Committee Report was filed on October 21, 2015 (H. Rept. 114–302).

On November 16, 2015, the House agreed on a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 1384 by 407 Yeas and 0 Nays. On November 17, 2015, H.R. 1384 was received in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

RUTH MOORE ACT OF 2015
(H.R. 1607)

Summary

H.R. 1607, Ruth Moore Act of 2015, would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to report to Congress, by December 1, 2015 and each year thereafter through 2019, on claims submitted during the previous fiscal year for disability compensation based on a covered mental health condition alleged to have been incurred or aggravated by military sexual trauma (covered claims). Each report shall include: the number of covered claims submitted or considered; the number and percentage of such claims submitted by each sex, and the number of claims approved or denied; the number and percentage, listed by each sex, of approved covered claims assigned to each rating percentage; the three most common reasons for denial of covered claims, and the number of denials based on the veteran’s failure to report for a medical examination; the number of covered claims pending and the number on appeal; the average number of days that covered claims take to complete; and a description of related training provided to Veterans Benefits Administration employees. The VA shall submit to Congress an initial report within 90 days after enactment of this Act, and annual reports beginning in December 2015. It is the sense of Congress that the VA should update regulations regarding military sexual trauma by: ensuring that military sexual trauma is specified as an in-service stressor in determining the service-connection of post-traumatic stress disorder, and recognizing the full range of physical and mental disabilities (including depression, anxiety, and other disabilities as indicated in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders published by the American Psychiatric Association) that can result from military sexual trauma. For the period starting fifteen months after enactment of this Act and lasting until VA publishes updated regulations, the VA shall provide: a copy of the congressional report to each veteran who has submitted a covered claim or been treated for military sexual trauma at a VA medical facility; and monthly to each such veteran, information that includes the date that the VA plans to complete such updated regulations, the number of granted or denied covered claims, a comparison to the rate of grants and denials with the rate for other claims regarding post-traumatic stress disorder, the three most common reasons for claim denials, and the average time for processing cov-
erred claims at each regional office. The VA shall report to Congress monthly regarding: (1) all adjudicated covered claims and their outcomes, and (2) the reason for denial of any covered claim.

H.R. 1607 would ensure the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 is amended to limit to $2 million during each of FY2016–FY2018 the aggregate amount of awards and bonuses paid to VA employees who are members of the Senior Executive Service.

Legislative History

H.R. 1607 was introduced by Representative Chellie Pingree on March 25, 2015 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had 31 cosponsors, 10 of which were original cosponsors.

On April 14, 2015, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a legislative hearing on H.R. 1607 and received testimony from the following witnesses: The Honorable Chellie Pingree, U.S. House of Representatives; Mr. David R. McLenachen, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Disability Assistance, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. McLenachen was accompanied by Ms. Laura H. Eskenazi, Executive-in-Charge and Vice Chairman, Board of Veterans’ Appeals, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. David J. Barrans, Assistant General Counsel, Office of General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Zachary Hearn, Deputy Director for Claims, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Mr. Blake C. Ortner, Deputy Government Relations Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Mr. Paul R. Varela, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Ronald B. Abrams, Joint Executive Director, National Veterans Legal Services Program; Mr. Kenneth M. Carpenter, Founding Member, National Organization of Veterans’ Advocates.

On May 14, 2015, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance on Memorial Affairs met in an open session and an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to H.R. 1607 was offered by Rep. Dina Titus of Nevada and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 1607, as amended passed the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On May 21, 2015 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs met in open session and an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1607 was offered by Rep. Mike Bost of Illinois and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 1607, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote. The Committee Report was filed on July 16, 2015 (H. Rept. 114–207).

On July 27, 2015, the House agreed on a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 1607, as amended, by voice vote.

On July 28, 2015, H.R. 1607 was received in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans Affairs.
TO NAME THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMUNITY-BASED OUTPATIENT CLINIC IN THE DALLES, OREGON, AS THE “LOREN R. KAUFMAN VA CLINIC”

(H.R. 1762)

Summary

H.R. 1762 would establish that the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic located at 704 Veterans Drive, The Dalles, Oregon, shall be designated as the “Loren R. Kaufman VA Clinic.”

Legislative History

H.R. 1762 was introduced by Representative Greg Walden on April 13, 2015 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had 4 cosponsors, 3 of which were original cosponsors.

On May 23, 2015, the House agreed on a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 1762, as amended, by voice vote.

On June 10, 2015, the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs discharged the bill by Unanimous Consent. H.R. 1762 passed the Senate without amendment by Unanimous Consent.

On June 14, 2015, H.R. 1762 was presented to the President.

On June 22, 2015, H.R. 1762 was signed by the President and became Public Law No: 114–179.

VA ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2015

(H.R. 1994)

Summary

H.R. 1994, VA Accountability Act of 2015, would authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to remove or demote a VA employee based on performance or misconduct. The VA may also remove an individual from the civil service or demote the individual through a reduction in grade or annual pay rate. A demoted individual: (1) shall be paid at the demoted rate as of the date of demotion, (2) may not be placed on administrative leave or any other category of paid leave while an appeal is ongoing, and (3) may only receive pay and other benefits if the individual reports for duty. The VA shall notify Congress of, and the reason for, any removal or demotion. An employee shall have the right to an appeal before the Merit Systems Protection Board within seven days of removal or demotion. If an administrative judge does not make a final decision within 45 days the original decision becomes final. The Board or an administrative judge may not stay any removal or demotion. Between the date on which an individual appeals a removal from the civil service and the date on which the administrative judge issues a final decision on the appeal, the individual may not receive any pay, awards, bonuses, incentives, allowances, differentials, student loan repayments, special payments, or benefits. The VA may not remove or demote an employee during the pendency of a whistleblower complaint made to the VA Office of Special Counsel or to the central whistleblower office until a final decision has been made. The Special Counsel may terminate an in-
vestigation of a prohibited personnel practice alleged by a VA employee or former employee after it has given the individual a written statement of the reasons for the termination.

H.R. 1994, would establish an individual's appointment to a permanent position within the competitive service or as a career appointee within the Senior Executive Service (SES) shall become final after an 18-month probationary period, which the VA may extend. Final appointment shall be made by the employee's supervisor.

H.R. 1994 would establish an additional method for filing whistleblower complaints in which a VA employee may file such complaints with his or her immediate and next-level supervisors, and ultimately with the VA after having properly filed a complaint at each supervisory level. If a supervisor makes a positive determination regarding such complaint the VA shall: (1) inform the employee of the ability to volunteer for a transfer, and (2) give preference to such transfer. The VA may not exempt any employee from such whistleblower coverage. The central whistleblower office shall be responsible for investigating all VA whistleblower complaints, regardless of whether such complaints are made by or against an employee who is not a SES member. The VA shall ensure that the central whistleblower office: is not an element of the Office of the General Counsel; is not headed by an official who reports to the General Counsel; does not provide, or receive from, the General Counsel any information regarding a whistleblower complaint except pursuant to an action regarding the complaint before an administrative body or court; and does not provide advice to the General Counsel.

The VA shall carry out the following adverse actions against a supervisor who commits a prohibited personnel action relating to a whistleblower complaint: for a first offense, an adverse action that is not less than a 14-day suspension and not more than removal; and for a second offense, removal. A supervisor subject to an adverse employment action shall have five days to respond to a notification of the proposed action, and if the supervisor's response is inadequate or untimely, the adverse action will take effect. The criteria used to evaluate a supervisor's performance shall include whistleblower-related actions. A supervisor who commits a prohibited personnel action shall not be paid any award or bonus for a one-year period, and any award or bonus paid during that period shall be recouped. VA employees shall receive annual whistleblower complaint training.

H.R. 1994 would ensure the VA shall provide five annual performance level ratings for SES employees as follows: outstanding, exceeds fully successful, fully successful, minimally satisfactory, and unsatisfactory. The number of employees who may receive outstanding or exceeds fully successful ratings in each year is limited. At least once every five years the VA shall reassign each individual employed in an SES position to a position at a different location that does not include the supervision of the same personnel or programs. The VA may waive this requirement if it notifies Congress of the waiver and the reasons for it. The VA shall enter into a contract with a nongovernmental entity to review the SES management training program.
H.R. 1994 would ensure the VA shall reduce the federal annuity of an individual removed from the SES who: (1) is convicted of a felony that influenced his or her performance while employed in that position, and (2) was afforded prior notice and an opportunity for a hearing conducted by another department or federal agency. The VA may reduce the federal annuity of an individual convicted of such a felony and who was subject to removal or transfer from the SES, but who left the VA before final action was taken.

H.R. 1994 would establish that the VA may not place an employee on administrative leave or any other type of paid non-duty status for more than a total of 14 days during any 365-day period. The VA may waive this prohibition if it gives Congress a detailed explanation of the reasons the employee was placed on such leave or status and the reasons for extending that placement.

H.R. 1994 would establish Congressional testimony by a VA employee in his or her official capacity shall be considered official duty, and the VA shall provide any such employee with travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, during the period when the employee is so testifying.

H.R. 1994 would ensure the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 is amended to reduce to $300 million the aggregate amount of awards and bonuses that may be paid by the VA in each of FY2015–FY2018.

H.R. 1994 would ensure the Government Accountability Office shall study the amount of time spent by VA employees carrying out labor organizing activities and the amount of VA space used for such activities.

H.R. 1994 would ensure the VA Inspector General shall submit to the VA and to Congress any report that recommends actions to address an issue with respect to public health or safety relating to misconduct by a VA employee. Such a report shall include: (1) an explanation of any VA-recommended changes to the report during the period in which the Inspector General was preparing the report, and (2) the names of each responsible manager (which the Inspector General shall not make public). The VA: (1) shall notify each responsible manager within seven days and provide such person with appropriate counseling and a mitigation plan to resolve the issue, and (2) may not pay any bonus or award to such manager if an issue is unresolved.

**Legislative History**

H.R. 1994 was introduced by Chairman Jeff Miller on April 23, 2015 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs in addition to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. The bill had 98 cosponsors, 5 of which were original cosponsors.

On June 2, 2015 the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a legislative hearing on H.R. 1994 and received testimony from the following witnesses: The Honorable Bill Flores, U.S. House of Representatives, 17th Congressional District, Texas; The Honorable Paul Cook, U.S. House of Representatives, 8th Congressional District, California; The Honorable Sean Patrick Maloney, U.S. House of Representatives, 18th Congressional District, New York; Mr. Paul R. Varela, Assistant National Legislative Director,
Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Brendon Gehrke, Senior Legislative Associate, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Mr. Steve Gonzalez, Assistant Director, Veterans Employment and Education Division, The American Legion; Mr. David Borer, General Counsel, American Federation of Government Employees, AFL–CIO; Mr. Christopher Neiweem, Legislative Associate, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; Mr. Rick Weidman, Executive Director, Government Affairs Vietnam Veterans of America; Mr. Curtis L. Coy, Deputy Under Secretary for Economic Opportunity, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Ms. Cathy Mitrano, Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Resource Management, Human Resources and Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Teresa W. Gerton, Acting Assistant Secretary, Veterans’ Employment and Training Service, U.S. Department of Labor; Dr. Susan S. Kelly, Director Transition to Veterans Program Office, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, U.S. Department of Defense.

On June 25, 2015, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session and an Amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1994 was offered by Rep. Brad Wenstrup of Ohio and was voted on by a recorded vote with 5 yeas to 4 nays, and was adopted by the EO Subcommittee. A Substitute to the Amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1994 was offered by Rep. Mark Takano of California and was voted on by a recorded vote with 5 nays to 4 yeas, and was not adopted by the EO Subcommittee. An Amendment to the Amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1994 was offered by Rep. Kathleen Rice of New York and was voted on by a recorded vote with 5 nays to 4 yeas, and was not adopted by the EO Subcommittee. H.R. 1994, as amended, passed the EO Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On July 15, 2015, the Full Committee met in open session and an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1994 was offered by Rep. Miller of Florida and was adopted by roll call. A substitute to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1994, as amended, was offered by Rep. Mark Takano of California and was not adopted by roll call. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1994, as amended, was offered by Rep. Tim Huelskamp of Kansas and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 1994, as amended, passed the Full Committee by a roll call vote of 14 yeas to 10 nays and was favorably reported to the Full House by voice vote.

On July 23, 2015, the Committee Report was filed and the bill was discharged from the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (H. Rept. 114–225 Part I).


On July 29, 2015, H.R. 1994 was passed by the House by 256 Yeas and 170 Nays.

On July 30, 2015, H.R. 1994 was received in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.
H.R. 2256, Veterans’ Information Modernization Act, would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to report annually to Congress during 2016 through 2020 on its furnishing of hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care. Each report shall:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) program in improving the quality of, and increasing access to, veterans hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care;
- Assess physician and other VHA employee workloads, patient demographics and utilization rates, physician compensation, physician and VHA employee productivity, the percentage of hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care provided to veterans in VA facilities and in non-VA facilities, pharmaceutical prices, and outstanding third party health billings.

H.R. 2256 would ensure the definition of homeless veteran is expanded for purposes of VA benefits.

H.R. 2256 would ensure the VA shall:
- Adopt the device identification system developed for medical devices by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or implement a comparable standard identification system to identify biological implants for use in VA medical facilities,
- Implement a system for tracking biological implants from human or animal source to implantation which shall be compatible with the identification system, and
- Implement inventory recall controls compatible with the tracking system. 180-day implementation deadlines are set for the identification and tracking systems.

H.R. 2256 would ensure the VA may procure biological implants of human origin only from a vendor that:
- Uses the standard identification system and has safeguards to ensure that a distinct identity code has been in place at each distribution step of each biological implant from its donor; is registered as required by the FDA, and for a vendor that uses a tissue distribution intermediary or a tissue processor, provides assurances that the intermediary or processor is registered as required by the FDA; ensures that donor eligibility determinations and other records accompany each biological implant at all times, regardless of the donor’s country of origin; agrees to cooperate with all biological implant recalls; agrees to notify the VA of any adverse event or reaction report it provides to the FDA, or of any FDA warning letter issued to the vendor or a tissue processor or tissue distribution intermediary it uses; agrees to retain all records associated with the procurement of a biological implant by the VA for at least 10 years; and provides assurances that the biological implants provided by the vendor are acquired only from tissue processors that maintain active accreditation with the American Association of Tissue Banks or a similar national accreditation specific to biological implants. The VA may procure biological implants of non-human origin only from a vendor that:
- Uses the standard identification system; is a registered establishment as required by the FDA, and in the case of a vendor that is not the original product manufacturer of such implants the vendor provides
assurances that the original product manufacturer is registered as required by the FDA; agrees to cooperate with all biological implant recalls; agrees to notify the VA of any adverse event report it provides to the FDA, or any FDA warning letter issued to the vendor or the original product manufacturer it uses; and agrees to retain all records associated with the procurement of a biological implant by the VA for at least 10 years. The VA shall procure biological implants under the General Services Administration’s federal supply schedules unless the implants are not available under them. A VA procurement employee who procures biological implants with the intent to avoid, or with reckless disregard of, the procurement requirements of this Act shall be ineligible to hold a certificate of appointment as a contracting officer or serve as a representative of an ordering officer, contracting officer, or purchase card holder.

H.R. 2256 would extend through FY2019 the mandatory rounding down of percentage increases of certain educational assistance rates and survivors’ and dependents’ educational assistance rates. Post-FY2019 increases shall be rounded to the nearest whole dollar.

H.R. 2256 would ensure The Veterans Expedited Recovery Commission is established to: examine the efficacy of the evidence-based therapy model for treating mental health illnesses of veterans; conduct a patient-centered survey within each of the Veterans Integrated Service Networks to examine the experience of veterans seeking mental health assistance through the VA and non-VA systems, the preferences of veterans regarding mental health treatment, and VA outreach efforts; examine complementary alternative treatment therapies for mental health issues; and study the potential increase of VA claims relating to mental health issues by veterans who served in Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, or Operation New Dawn, including an assessment of VA resources to meet such claims.

Legislative History

H.R. 2256 was introduced by Representative Dan Benishek on May 12, 2015 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had no cosponsors.

On May 15, 2015 the Subcommittee on Health met in an open session and ordered H.R. 2256 to be forwarded favorably to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On May 21, 2015 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs met in an open session and an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 2256 was offered by Rep. Dan Benishek of Michigan and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 2256, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote. The Committee Report was filed on July 7, 2015 (H. Rept. 114–191).

On July 21, 2015 the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 2256, as amended, by 408 Yeas and 0 Nays.

On July 22, 2015 H.R. 2256 was received in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.
CONSTRUCTION AUTHORIZATION AND CHOICE IMPROVEMENT ACT

(H.R. 2496)

Summary

H.R. 2496, Construction Authorization and Choice Improvement Act, would authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) to carry out the replacement of the existing VA Medical Center in Denver, Colorado, in FY2015 in an amount not to exceed $900 million.

H.R. 2496, would establish the 40-mile distance requirement for a veteran to use a non-VA medical facility under the veterans choice program of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 shall be construed to allow a veteran to access a non-VA medical facility if: the veteran resides more than 40 miles driving distance from the closest VA facility; or the veteran faces an unusual or excessive burden in traveling to such VA medical facility not only because of geographical challenges (as under current law) but also because of environmental factors, such as roads that are not accessible to the general public, traffic, or hazardous weather, because of a medical condition that impacts the ability to travel, or because of other factors as the Secretary determines.

Legislative History

H.R. 2496 was introduced by Representative Mike Coffman on May 21, 2015 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had no cosponsors.

On May 21, 2015 H.R. 2496 was discharged from the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and passed the House without objection.

On May 22, 2015 H.R. 2496 passed the Senate without amendment by voice vote and was presented to the President, signed by the President and became Public Law No: 114–19.

TO DESIGNATE THE ARBORETUM AT THE HUNTER HOLMES MCGUIRE VA MEDICAL CENTER IN RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, AS THE “PHYLLIS E. GALANTI ARBORETUM

(H.R. 2693)

Summary

H.R. 2693 would designates the arboretum at the Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond, Virginia, as the Phyllis E. Galanti Arboretum.

Legislative History

H.R. 2693 was introduced by Representative Dave Brat on June 9, 2015 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. This bill had 11 original cosponsors.

On December 8, 2015, H.R. 2693 was discharged from the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and passed the House without objection.

On December 10, 2015, H.R. 2693 was discharged from the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs by Unanimous Consent and passed the Senate without amendment by Unanimous Consent.
On December 11, 2015, H.R. 2693 was presented to the President.
On December 18, 2015, H.R. 2693 was signed by the President and became Public Law No: 114–103.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION AND VETERANS HEALTH CARE CHOICE IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2015

(H.R. 3236)

Summary H.R. 3236, Surface Transportation and Veterans Health Care Choice Improvement Act of 2015, would direct the Secretary of Transportation to reduce the amount apportioned for a surface transportation program, project, or activity for FY2015 by amounts apportioned or allocated under the Highway and Transportation Funding Act of 2014 and the Highway and Transportation Funding Act of 2015 for the period from October 1, 2014, through July 31, 2015.

H.R. 3236 would amend the Highway and Transportation Funding Act of 2014 to continue from October 1, 2014, through October 29, 2015, and authorizes appropriations through that period for specified federal-aid highway programs under: the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP–21), the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA–LU) Technical Corrections Act of 2008, SAFETEA–LU, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA–21), the National Highway System Designation Act of 1995, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), and other specified law. Subjects funding for FY2015, and for the period October 1, 2015 through October 29, 2015 for such programs, to certain funding level restrictions. Amends MAP–21 to authorize appropriations out of the general fund of the Treasury for the Tribal High Priority Projects program for the same period. Prescribes an obligation ceiling of $40.256 billion for FY2015, including $3,189,683,060 for the period October 1, 2015, through October 29, 2015, for federal-aid highway and highway safety construction programs.

H.R. 3236, would authorize appropriations from the HTF (other than the Mass Transit Account) for administrative expenses of the federal-aid highway program for the same period.

H.R. 3236 would extend for the same period the authorization of appropriations for National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) safety programs, including: highway safety research and development, national priority safety programs, the National Driver Register, the High Visibility Enforcement Program, and NHTSA administrative expenses. Amends SAFETEA–LU to extend for the same period high-visibility traffic safety law enforcement campaigns under the High Visibility Enforcement Program. Sets aside a specified amount of the total apportionment to states for highway safety programs for a cooperative program to research and evaluate priority highway safety countermeasures for the same period.

H.R. 3236 would extend for the same period the authorization of appropriations for Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) programs, including: motor carrier safety grants, FMCSA administrative expenses, commercial driver’s license program im-
provement grants, border enforcement grants, performance and registration information system management grants, commercial vehicle information systems and networks deployment grants, safety data improvement grants, a set-aside for high priority activities that improve commercial motor vehicle safety and compliance with commercial motor vehicle safety regulations, a set-aside for new entrant motor carrier audit grants, FMCSA outreach and education, and the commercial motor vehicle operators grant program.

H.R. 3236 would amend the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act to continue, for the same period, the authorized distribution of funds for coastal wetlands, recreational boating safety, projects under the Clean Vessel Act of 1992, boating infrastructure projects, and the National Outreach and Communications Program.

H.R. 3236 would extend for the same period the apportionment of nonurbanized (rural) area formula grants for competitive grants and formula grants for public transportation on Indian reservations.

H.R. 3236 would extend the apportionment of urbanized area formula grants for passenger ferry projects for the same period.

H.R. 3236 extend for the same period the authorization of appropriations from the HTF Mass Transit Account for: formula grants for public transportation, including allocations for specified projects; research, development demonstration, and deployment projects; the transit cooperative research program; technical assistance and standards development grants; human resources and training grants; capital investment grants; and administrative expenses.

H.R. 3236 would allocate, for the same period, certain amounts to states and territories for formula bus and bus facilities grants.

H.R. 3236 would authorize appropriations for the same period for hazardous materials (hazmat) transportation safety projects. Authorizes the Secretary to make certain expenditures, including an amount for hazmat training grants, from the Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness Fund for the same period.

H.R. 3236 would amends the Internal Revenue Code to extend through October 30, 2015, the authority for expenditures from: (1) the Highway and Mass Transit Accounts of the Highway Trust Fund, (2) the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, and (3) the Leaking Underground Storage Tank Trust Fund.

H.R. 3236 would appropriate additional funds to the Highway and Mass Transit Accounts of the Highway Trust Fund.

H.R. 3236 would require tax information returns reporting mortgage interest received in a trade or business to include: (1) the outstanding principal on the mortgage, (2) the date of the origination of the mortgage, and (3) the address of the property which secures the mortgage.

H.R. 3236 would require that: (1) the value of the basis in any property acquired from a decedent be consistent with the basis as determined for estate tax purposes; and (2) executors of estates disclose to the Internal Revenue Service and to persons acquiring any interest in the decedent’s estate information identifying the value of each interest received.
H.R. 3236 would make the six-year limitation on assessments of additional tax applicable to understatements of gross income due to an overstatement of unrecovered costs or other basis.

H.R. 3236 would change tax return due dates for partnerships, S corporations, and C corporations. Extends the automatic extension for corporate income tax returns from three to six months.

H.R. 3236 would extend through 2025 the authority for transfers of excess pension assets of a defined benefit plan to a retiree health benefits account.

H.R. 3236 would equalize excise tax rates for liquefied petroleum gas, liquefied natural gas, and compressed natural gas.

H.R. 3236 would revise aviation security service passenger fee requirements. Requires the deposit into the Treasury as offsetting receipts the following sums collected to pay the costs of providing civil aviation security services to airline passengers: $1.560 billion for FY2024, and $1.6 billion for FY2025.

H.R. 3236 would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to develop a plan to consolidate all non-VA provider programs into a new, single Veterans Choice Program to furnish hospital care and medical services at non-VA facilities for veterans in the patient enrollment system.

H.R. 3236 would require the presidential budget for FY2017 and every ensuing fiscal year to include an appropriations account for non-VA provider programs.

H.R. 3236 would grant the VA temporary authority, until the end of FY2015, to use certain transfers from the Veterans Choice Fund to pay for health care for eligible veterans at non-VA facilities, including pharmaceuticals for treatment of Hepatitis C.

H.R. 3236 would modifies requirements of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to: repeal the 60-day limit on follow-up care; repeal the August 1, 2012, enrollment limitation on the eligibility of veterans in the patient enrollment system; extend provider eligibility to any health care provider meeting VA criteria; and base the 40-mile distance requirement as on distance traveled from a VA medical facility, including one offering primary care for a veteran seeking primary care.

H.R. 3236 would prohibit the use of funds by the VA to expand the dialysis pilot program, or to create any new dialysis capability provided by the VA in a facility that is not an initial facility under the dialysis pilot program, until an independent analysis of the dialysis pilot program is conducted for each such initial facility and 180 days have elapsed since the VA reports on the results.

H.R. 3236 would Amends the Internal Revenue Code to: exclude individuals covered for medical care under TRICARE or the VA from the determination of whether an employer is an applicable large employer with respect to employee enrollment in minimum essential health care coverage under an eligible employer-sponsored plan, treat a veteran receiving hospital care or medical services for a service-connected disability as not disqualified from participating in or contributing to a tax-preferred health savings account.

H.R. 3236 would designate this title, except for section 4007, an emergency requirement, thereby exempting it from the pay-as-you-go requirement of budget neutrality.
Legislative History

H.R. 3236 was introduced by Representative Bill Shuster on July 28, 2015 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs in addition to the Committees on: House Transportation and Infrastructure; House Ways and Means; House Energy and Commerce; House Science, Space, and Technology; House Natural Resources; House Education and the Workforce; House Budget; House Homeland Security. The bill had 2 original cosponsors.

On July 29, 2015 the House passed H.R. 3236 by 385 Yeas and 34 Nays and 1 Present.

On July 30, 2015 H.R. 3236 was received in the Senate, read twice, considered, read the third time, and passed (under the order of 7/29/15, having achieved 60 votes in the affirmative) without amendment by 91 Yeas and 4 Nays.

On July 31, 2015 H.R. 3236 was presented to the President, signed by the President, and became Public Law No: 114–41.

HIRE VETS ACT
(H.R. 3286)

Summary

H.R. 3286, HIRE VETS Act, would direct the Department of Labor to establish a HIRE Vets Medallion Program to solicit voluntary information from employers for purposes of recognizing, by the award of a HIRE Vets Medallion, verified efforts by these employers to: (1) recruit, employ, and retain veterans; and (2) provide community and charitable services supporting the veteran community. Labor shall annually: (1) solicit voluntary medallion applications from employers, and (2) review applications and present the President with a list of recipients. The President shall annually present the medallion and corresponding certificate to recipients at a time to coincide with the annual commemoration of Veterans Day. Labor shall begin soliciting applications by January 31, stop accepting applications not earlier than April 30, and finish application review by August 31. The President shall notify chosen applicants no later than October 11. Medallions shall be awarded in November.

H.R. 3286 would state that labor shall establish two levels of medallions for large and small employers, to be designated the Gold HIRE Vets Medallion and the Platinum HIRE Vets Medallion. The bill prescribes awards criteria.

H.R. 3286 would establish that a recipient: (1) may publicly display the medallion and certificate through the end of the calendar year, and (2) may not publicly display the award as part of any advertisement implying receipt of the award for any calendar year other than the one in which it was awarded.

H.R. 3286 would establish the HIRE Vets Medallion Award Fund. Labor may assess a reasonable medallion application fee and shall deposit such fees into the fund.

H.R. 3286 would state that beginning two years after enactment of this bill, Labor shall submit annual reports on fees, program costs, the number of applications, and the medallions awarded, including the name and medallion level of each recipient.
H.R. 3286 excludes from the definition of “employer” the federal government, any state, or any foreign state.

H.R. 3286 would ensure that The Veterans Access Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 is amended to cap FY2016 bonuses at $2 million for senior executive service employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Legislative History

On April 14, 2016 the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a legislative hearing on H.R. 3286 and received testimony from the following witnesses: Honorable David McKinley, U.S. House of Representatives, 1st Congressional District, West Virginia; the Honorable Paul Cook U.S. House of Representatives, 8th Congressional District, California, and the Honorable Martha McSally, U.S. House of Representatives, 2nd Congressional District, Arizona; Mr. Curtis L. Coy, Deputy Under Secretary for Economic Opportunity with the Veterans Benefits Administration at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. Coy was accompanied by Ms. Carin Otero, Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for HR Policy and Planning in the Office of Human Resources and Administration at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. Sam Shellenberger, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Operations with the Veterans’ Employment and Training Service at the U.S. Department of Labor also provided testimony; Mr. Davy Leghorn, Assistant Director, Veterans Employment and Education Division, The American Legion; Dr. Joseph W. Wescott, Legislative Director at the National Association of State Approving Agencies; Mr. Walter Ochinko, Policy Director with the Veterans Education Success; Mr. Jared Lyon, President & CEO with Student Veterans of America; and Mr. Aleks Morosky, Deputy Director of National Legislative Service for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; A statement for the record was provided by Office of Inspector General at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On May 11, 2016 an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3286 was offered by Rep. Wenstrup of Ohio. The amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to by the EO Subcommittee by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 3286, as amended to the Full Committee was offered by Ranking Member Takano of California and was adopted by the EO Subcommittee by voice vote.

On May 18, 2016, the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs met in an open session and an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3286, as amended was offered by Chairman Miller of Florida and was agreed to by the Full Committee via voice vote. H.R. 3286, as amended passed the Full Committee via voice vote and a motion to favorably report H.R. 3286, as amended to the House of Representatives was offered by Ranking Member Brown and agreed to via voice vote. The Committee Report was filed on September 6, 2016 (H. Rept. 114–708).

On November 29, 2016 the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 3286, as amended by voice vote.

On November 30, 2016 H.R. 3286 was received in the Senate.
Summary

H.R. 3715, Final Farewell Act of 2016, would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs to permit the interment or funeral, memorial service, or ceremony of a deceased veteran at a national cemetery during weekends, other than federal holiday weekends, upon the request of the veteran’s next-of-kin. Any grant to assist a state in establishing a veterans’ cemetery shall require that the cemetery permits the interment or funeral, memorial service, or ceremony of a deceased veteran during weekends, other than federal holiday weekends, upon the request of the veteran’s next-of-kin.

Legislative History

H.R. 3715 was introduced by Representative Corrine Brown on October 8, 2015 and was referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. This bill had no cosponsors.

On April 13, 2016 the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a legislative hearing on H.R. 3715 and received testimony from the following witnesses: the Honorable Jeff Miller, U.S. House of Representatives, 1st Congressional District, Florida; the Honorable Corrine Brown, 5th Congressional District, Florida; the Honorable Ryan Costello, U.S. House of Representatives, 6th Congressional District, Pennsylvania; and the Honorable Mia Love, U.S. House of Representatives, 4th Congressional District, Utah; Mr. David R. McLenachen, Deputy Under Secretary for Disability Assistance with the Veterans Benefits Administration at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. McLenachen was accompanied by Mr. Matt Sullivan, Deputy Under Secretary of Finance and Planned and CFO with the National Cemetery Administration with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. Patrick K. Hallinan, Executive Director with the Army National Military Cemeteries at the Department of the Army; Mr. Carl Blake, Associate Executive Director for Government Relations for the Paralyzed Veterans of America; Mr. Aleks Morosky, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Mr. Paul R. Varela, Assistant National Legislative Director for the Disabled American Veterans; Ms. Elizabeth Davis, Advocate for Survivors’ Benefits; and Mr. Edward G. Lilley, Team Leader for the Health Policy, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division for the American Legion; A statement for the record was proved by Mr. John Rowan, National President of Vietnam Veterans of America On May 11, 2016 the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs met in an open session and an A.N.S. to H.R. 3715 was offered by Rep. Titus of Nevada was agreed to by the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 3715, as amended to the Full Committee was offered by Ranking Member Titus and was adopted by the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote.

On May 18, 2016 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs met in an open session and a motion to favorably report H.R. 3715, as amend-
ed to the House of Representatives was offered by Ranking Member Brown of Florida and was agreed to via voice vote.

On May 23, 2016 the House agreed on a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 3715, as amended by voice vote.

On May 24, 2016 H.R. 3715 was received in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

**Full Committee Legislative Hearing on H.R. 189, H.R. 216, H.R. 245, H.R. 280, and H.R. 294**

On January 27, 2015, the Full Committee held a legislative hearing on H.R. 189, the Servicemember Foreclosure Protections Extension Act of 2015; H.R. 216, the Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Planning Reform Act of 2015; H.R. 245, to amend title 38, United States Code, to codify certain existing provisions of law relating to effective dates for claims under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; H.R. 280, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to recoup bonuses and awards paid to employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and, H.R. 294, the Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: the Honorable Alan Grayson, Member of Congress, U.S. House of Representatives, 9th Congressional District of Florida.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: David R. McLlenachen, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Disability Assistance Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs: Accompanied by: Rajiv Jain, M.D., Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Patient Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Susan Sullivan, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy Office of Policy and Planning, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and, Kim McLeod, Counsel Office of General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by: Joseph A. Violante, National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Aleks Morosky, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Zachary Hearn, Deputy Director, Claims of the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, The American Legion; Blake Ortner, Deputy Government Relations Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America. See “Hearing on H.R. 189, H.R. 216, H.R. 245, H.R. 280, and H.R. 294,” Serial No. 114–3.

**Full Committee Markup of H.R. 280, H.R. 294, H.R. 216, and H.R. 189**

On February 12, 2015, the Full Committee met and marked up H.R. 280, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to recoup bonuses and awards paid to employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, introduced by Chairman Jeff Miller of Florida; H.R. 294, the Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act, introduced by Chairman Jeff Miller of Florida; H.R. 216, the Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Planning Reform Act of 2015, introduced by Ranking Member Corrine Brown of Florida; and, H.R. 189, the Servicemember Foreclosure Protections Extension Act of 2015, introduced by Rep. Alan Grayson of Florida.
On February 12, 2015, an amendment in the nature of a substitute H.R. 280 was offered by Chairman Jeff Miller of Florida and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 280, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote.

On February 12, 2015, an amendment in the nature of a substitute H.R. 294 was offered by Chairman Jeff Miller of Florida and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 294, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote.

On February 12, 2015, an amendment in the nature of a substitute H.R. 216 was offered by Ranking Member Corrine Brown of Florida and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 216, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote.

On February 12, 2015, H.R. 189 passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote.

**Full Committee Markup of H.R. 475, H.R. 571, H.R. 675, H.R. 1575, H.R. 1607, and H.R. 2256**


On May 21, 2015, an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to H.R. 475 was offered by Rep. Brad Wenstrup of Ohio and was adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 475 was offered by Rep. Mark Takano of California and was not adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. H.R. 475, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote.

On May 21, 2015, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 571 was offered by Chairman Jeff Miller of Florida and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 571, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote.

On May 21, 2015, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 675 was offered by Rep. Ralph Abraham of Louisiana and was adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 675 was offered by Rep. Ryan Costello of Pennsylvania and was adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. H.R. 675, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote.

On May 21, 2015, H.R. 1575 passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote.
On May 21, 2015, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1607 was offered by Rep. Mike Bost of Illinois and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 1607, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote.

On May 21, 2015, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 2256 was offered by Rep. Dan Benishek of Michigan and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 2256, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote.

**Full Committee Markup of H.R. 1994**

On July 15, 2015, the Full Committee met and marked up H.R. 1994, VA Accountability Act of 2015, introduced by Chairman Jeff Miller of Florida.

On July 15, 2015, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1994, as amended, was offered by Chairman Jeff Miller of Florida and was adopted by roll call. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1994, as amended, was offered by Rep. Mark Takano of California and was not adopted by roll call. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1994, as amended, was offered by Rep. Tim Huelskamp of Kansas and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 1994, as amended, passed the Full Committee by a roll call vote of 14 yeas to 10 nos and was favorably reported to the Full House by voice vote.

**Full Committee Markup of Markup of H.R. 3106, as Amended; H.R. 3016; H.R. 677; H.R. 1338; H.R. 1384; H.R. 2360, as Amended; and H.R. 2915**

On September 17, 2015, the Full Committee met and marked up H.R. 3106, as amended, the Construction Reform Act of 2015, introduced by Chairman Jeff Miller of Florida; H.R. 3016, the VA Provider Equity Act, introduced by Rep. Brad Wenstrup of Ohio; H.R. 677, the American Heroes COLA Act of 2015, introduced by Rep. Ralph Abraham of Louisiana; Unanimous Consent to consider the remaining agenda items to include the following bills and amendments En Bloc was agreed to without objection with a quorum present: H.R. 1338, the Dignified Interment of Our Veterans Act of 2015, introduced by Rep. Bill Shuster of Pennsylvania, with an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute offered by Rep. Ralph Abraham of Louisiana; H.R. 1384, the Honor America’s Guard-Reserve Retirees Act, introduced by Rep. Tim Walz of Minnesota; H.R. 2360, as amended, the Career Ready Student Veterans Act, introduced by Rep. Mark Takano of California; H.R. 2915, the Female Veteran Suicide Prevention Act, introduced by Rep. Julia Brownley of California, with an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute offered by Rep. Julia Brownley of California.

On September 17, 2015, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3106, as amended, was offered by Chairman Jeff Miller of Florida and was adopted. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3106, as amended, was offered by Rep. Julia Brownley of California and was adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. An amendment to the amend-
ment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3106, as amended, was offered by Rep. Kathleen Rice of New York and was adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. The amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3106, as amended, was adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. H.R. 3106, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably reported to the Full House by voice vote.

On September 17, 2015, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3016 was offered by Rep. Brad Wenstrup of Ohio and was adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3016 was offered by Rep. Phil Roe of Tennessee and was adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3016 was offered by Rep. Mark Takano of California and was not adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. An additional amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3016 was offered by Rep. Mark Takano of California and was not adopted by the Full Committee by roll call. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3016 was offered by Rep. Dina Titus of Nevada and was not adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. The amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3016, as amended, was adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. H.R. 3016, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably reported to the Full House by voice vote.

On September 17, 2015, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 677 was offered by Rep. Ralph Abraham of Louisiana and was adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 677 was offered by Rep. Dina Titus of Nevada and was not adopted by the Full Committee by roll call. The amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 677, as amended, was adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. H.R. 677, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably reported to the Full House by voice vote.

On September 17, 2015, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1338 was offered by Rep. Ralph Abraham of Louisiana and was adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. H.R. 1338, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably reported to the Full House by voice vote.

On September 17, 2015, H.R. 1384 passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote.

On September 17, 2015, H.R. 2360, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote.

On September 17, 2015, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 2915 was offered by Rep. Julia Brownley of California and was adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. H.R. 2915, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote.
Site Visit—Denver, CO

On January 20, 2015, the Chairman of the Full Committee traveled to Denver, Colorado, to conduct an oversight visit to the Eastern Colorado Health Care System Clinic replacement hospital site with Rep. Mike Coffman of Colorado and Rep. Doug Lamborn of Colorado. The visit was in response to VA’s breach of contract with Kiewit-Turner and the project’s excessive cost overruns and delays. The trip took place in advance of a Full Committee hearing on the Denver project entitled, “Building a Better VA: Assessing Ongoing Major Construction Management Problems within the Department.”

Full Committee Hearing—Building a Better VA: Assessing Ongoing Major Construction Management Problems Within the Department

On January 21, 2015, the Full Committee met in open session to conduct a hearing assessing the ongoing construction and management problems within the Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: the Honorable Sloan D. Gibson, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Dennis Milsten, Associate Executive Director, Office of Programs and Plans, Office of Construction and Facilities Management, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and, Lloyd C. Caldwell, P.E. Director of Military Programs, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: David Wise, Director, Physical Infrastructure Issues, U.S. Government Accountability Office; Roscoe Butler, Deputy Director for Healthcare, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; and, Ray Kelley, Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars. See “Building a Better VA: Assessing Ongoing Major Construction Management Problems within the Department,” Serial No. 114–1.

Full Committee Business Meeting—To Formally Organize the Veterans’ Affairs Committee for the 114th Congress

On January 21, 2015, the Full Committee met to formally establish the Veterans’ Affairs Committee for the 114th Congress.

There were no testimonies provided. See “Business Meeting to Formally Organize the Veterans’ Affairs Committee for the 114th Congress.”

Full Committee Hearing—U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2016

On February 11, 2015, the Full Committee met to discuss the Department of Veterans Affair’s Fiscal Year 2016 budget request to Congress.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: the Honorable Robert A. McDonald, Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Af-
fairs; Accompanied by: Carolyn Clancy M.D., Interim Under Secretary for Health, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; the Honorable Allison A. Hickey, Under Secretary for Benefits, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ronald E. Walters, Interim Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Helen Tierney, Executive in Charge for the Office of Management, and VA Chief Financial Officer, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and, Stephen Warren, Executive in Charge and Chief Information Officer, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: Carl Blake, Associate Executive Director, Government Relations, Paralyzed Veterans of America, On Behalf of the Co-Authors of the Independent Budget: Accompanied by: Joseph A. Violante, National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Ray Kelley, Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Diane M. Zumatto, National Legislative Director, AMVETS; and, Ian de Planque, Legislative Director, The American Legion. See “U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2016,” Serial No. 114–7.

Full Committee Business Meeting—To Designate Congressman Jerry McNerney (CA–09) and Congressman Tim Walz (MN–01) to HVAC Subcommittees

On February 11, 2015, the Full Committee met to discuss the designation of Congressman Jerry McNerney of California and Congressman Tim Walz of Minnesota to a subcommittee.

There were no testimonies provided. See “Business Meeting to Designate Congressman Jerry McNerney (CA–09) and Congressman Tim Walz (MN–01) to HVAC Subcommittees.”

Full Committee Hearing—Joint Hearing of the House and Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committees To Receive the Legislative Presentation of the Disabled American Veterans

On February 24, 2015, the Full Committee participated in a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee to receive testimony from the Disabled American Veterans on its 2015 legislative priorities.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: Ronald F. Hope, National Commander, Disabled American Veterans; Accompanied by: J. Marc Burgess, National Adjutant; Barry A. Jesinoski, Executive Director, National Headquarters; Garry J. Augustine, Executive Director, Washington Headquarters; Jim Marszalek, National Service Director; Joseph A. Violante, National Legislative Director; John Kleindienst, National Director of Voluntary Service; Jeffrey C. Hall, National Director of Employment; and, LeeAnn Karg, DAV Auxiliary National Commander. See “Joint Hearing of the House and Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committees to receive the Legislative Presentation of the Disabled American Veterans.” This hearing was hosted by the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee and therefore does not have a House Serial No.
Full Committee Hearing—Joint Hearing of the House and Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committees To Receive the Legislative Presentation of the American Legion

On February 25, 2015, the Full Committee participated in a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee to receive testimony from The American Legion on its 2015 legislative priorities.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: Michael D. Helm, National Commander, The American Legion; Accompanied by: Brett Reistad, Legislative Chairman; Ian de Planque, Legislative Director; Ralph Bozella, Chairman, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation; Louis Celli, Director, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation; James Fratolillo, Chairman, Veterans Employment and Veterans Preference Committee; and Joseph Sharpe, Jr., Director, Veterans Employment and Education. See “Joint Hearing of the House and Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committees to receive the Legislative Presentation of The American Legion,” This hearing was hosted by the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee and therefore does not have a House Serial No.

Full Committee Roundtable

On February 27, 2015, the Full Committee held a roundtable discussion with veterans service organizations on issues facing America’s veterans. Members of the Full Committee attended the roundtable, as did: Mr. Michael D. Helm, National Commander, American Legion; Robert L. Frank, CMSgt (Ret.) USAF, Chief Executive Officer, Air Force Sergeants Association; Mr. Aaron G. Bresnahan, National President, Association of the U.S. Navy; Mr. Mark Cornell, National President, Blinded Veterans of America; Mr. Pete Hegseth, Chief Executive Officer, Concerned Veterans of America; Mr. Ronald Hope, National Commander, Disabled American Veterans; Mr. John D. Ippert, National President, Fleet Reserve Association; Ms. Harriet Boyden, President, Gold Star Wives of America; Mr. Paul Rieckhoff, Founder/CEO, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; Col. Maxwell Spencer Colon, USA (Ret.), National Commander, Jewish War Veterans of America; Vice Admiral Norbert R. Ryan, Jr., USN (Ret.), President/CEO, Military Officers of America Association; Mr. Pat Little, National Commander, Military Order of the Purple Heart; Mr. Joseph W. Wescott, II, Ed. D., National Association of State Approving Agencies; Mr. Lonnie Wangen, President, National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Bob Simoneau, Deputy Executive Director, National Association of State Workforce Agencies; Lt. Gen. Jack Klimp,; President, National Association for Uniformed Services; MG Gus L. Hargett, President, National Guard Association of the United States; Ms. Joyce Wessel Raezer, Executive Director, National Military Family Association; Sgt. Maj. H. Gene Overstreet, President, Non-Commissioned Officers of America; Mr. Al Kovach, Jr., National President, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Ms. Anne Marie Dougherty, Executive Director, The Bob Woodruff Foundation; BG Michael J. Silva, USAR (Ret.), President, Reserve Officers Association; Mr. John F. Downing, President/CEO, Soldier On; Mr. Larry Hyland, USAF (Ret.), National President, The Retired Enlisted Association; Ms. Bonnie Carroll,
Founder/President, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors; Mr. Charlie Huebner, Chief, U.S. Paralympics; Mr. John W. Stroud, Commander-in-Chief, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Mr. John Rowan, National President, Vietnam Veterans of America; Mr. Steven Nardizzi, Esq., Executive Director, Wounded Warrior Project.

Site Visit—Tucson, AZ

On March 1, 2015, the Chairman of the Full Committee traveled to Tucson, Arizona, to conduct oversight visits to the Southern Arizona VA Health Care System and the University of Arizona's VETS Centers. The visit to SAVAHCS focused on the implementation of the Choice program as well as staffing, productivity, homelessness, and care for blind and visually impaired veterans. The visit to U of A's VETS Centers focused on the centers' impact on the school's veteran student population.

Full Committee Hearing—Joint Hearing of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees To Receive the Legislative Presentation of the Veterans of Foreign Wars

On March 4, 2015, the Full Committee participated in a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to receive testimony from Veterans of Foreign Wars on its 2015 legislative priorities.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: John W. Stroud, Commander in Chief, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Accompanied by: Bill Bradshaw, Director, National Veterans Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Bob Wallace, Executive Director, Washington, DC Office, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Ray Kelley, Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; and, Gil Hernandez, Chairman, National Legislative Committee. This hearing was hosted by the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee and therefore does not have a House Serial No.

Full Committee Hearing—The Power of Legislative Inquiry—Improving the VA by Improving Transparency

On March 16, 2015, the Full Committee met to discuss transparency within the Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: the Honorable Leigh A. Bradley, General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Maureen T. Regan, Counselor to the Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Charles Tiefer, Professor of Law, University of Baltimore School of Law; Michael D. Bopp, Partner, Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP. See “The Power of Legislative Inquiry—Improving the VA by Improving Transparency,” Serial No. 114–9.

Full Committee Hearing—Joint Hearing of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees To Receive the Legislative Presentation of Multiple Veterans Service Organizations (JWV, AFSA, TREA, FRA, NASDVA, NGAUS, AXPOW, GSW and WWP)

On March 18, 2015, the Full Committee participated in a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to receive tes-
timony from multiple veterans' organizations on their 2015 legislative priorities.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: COL Maxwell S. Colón (USA, Ret.), National Commander, Jewish War Veterans; Rob Frank, Chief Executive Officer, Air Force Sergeants Association; Larry Hyland, National President, The Retired Enlisted Association; John D. Ippert, National President, Fleet Reserve Association; Lonnie Wangen, President, National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs; COL Peter J. Duffy (USA, Ret.), Director Legislation, National Guard Association of the United States; Charles Susino, Jr., Past National Commander and Chair of the Legislative Committee, American Ex-Prisoners of War; Jeanette B. Early, National President Emeritus, Gold Star Wives; and Ryan Kules, National Director, Alumni, Wounded Warrior Project. This hearing was hosted by the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee and therefore does not have a House Serial No.

Site Visit—Milwaukee, WI

On March 29–31, 2015, the Chairman of the Full Committee traveled to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to conduct an oversight visit to the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center. The oversight visit focused on the implementation of the Choice program, as well as the facility's pain management practices, care for blind and visually impaired veterans, and construction and facility maintenance. The Chairman also visited the VA River Valley Outpatient Clinic in La Crosse, Wisconsin.

Full Committee Field Hearing—Tomah VAMC: Examining Quality, Access, and a Culture of Over-Reliance on High-Risk Medications

On March 30, 2015, the Full Committee conducted a Full Committee oversight field hearing with the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs to discuss over-prescription of high-risk medication at the Tomah VA Medical Center in Tomah, Wisconsin.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: Candace Delis, Auburndale, WI; Ryan Honl, Tomah, WI; Noelle Johnson, PHARM.D., BCACP, CGP Urbandale, IA; Heather Simcakoski, Stevens Point, WI; and Marvin Simcakoski, Stevens Point, WI.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: John Daigh, M.D., Assistant Inspector General for Healthcare Inspections, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Alan Mallinger, M.D., Senior Physician, Office of Healthcare Inspections; Carolyn Clancy M.D., Interim Under Secretary for Health, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Renee Oshinski, Acting Network Director, VISN 12, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and, Mario V. DeSanctis, FACHE, Medical Center Director, Tomah VAMC. See “Tomah VAMC: Examining Quality, Access, and a Culture of Over-Reliance on High-Risk Medications.” This hearing was hosted by the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee and therefore does not have a House Serial No.
Full Committee Hearing—Denver Va Medical Center: Constructing a Way Forward

On April 15, 2015, the Full Committee met to discuss the construction of the VA Medical Center in Denver, Colorado.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: Lloyd C. Caldwell, P.E., Director of Military Programs, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Department of the Army; and the Honorable Sloan D. Gibson, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Stella Fiotes, Executive Director, Office of Construction and Facilities Management, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and, Dennis Milsten, Director of Operations, Office of Construction and Facilities Management, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See “Denver VA Medical Center: Constructing a Way Forward,” Serial No. 114–15.

Full Committee Hearing—Philadelphia and Oakland: Systemic Failures and Mismanagement

On April 22, 2015, the Full Committee met to discuss the failures and mismanagements of the VA in Philadelphia, PA, and Oakland, CA.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: Kristen Ruell, J.D., Whistleblower, Philadelphia Regional Office, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Joseph Malizia, President, Local 940, American Federation of Government Employees; Diana Blender, Whistleblower, Philadelphia Regional Office, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Rustyann Brown, Whistleblower, Oakland Regional Office, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: Linda Halliday, Assistant Inspector General for Audits and Evaluations, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Nora Stokes, Director, Bay Pines Benefits Inspections Division, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Brent Arronte, Director, San Diego Benefits Inspections Division, Office of Audits and Evaluations, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Testimony was also provided by Danny G. I. Pummill, Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by; Diana Rubens, Director, Philadelphia Regional Office, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Lucy Filipov, Assistant Director, Philadelphia Regional Office, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Julianna M. Boor, Director, Oakland Regional Office, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Michele Kwok, Assistant Director, Oakland Regional Office, Veterans Benefits Administration. See, “Philadelphia and Oakland: Systemic Failures and Mismanagement,” Serial No. 114–16.

Full Committee Hearing—Examining Access and Quality of Care and Services for Women Veterans

On April 30, 2015, the Full Committee met to discuss the care and services that are provided to women veterans through the Department of Veterans Affairs.
On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: Dawn Halfaker, veteran; Joy Ilem, Deputy National Legislative Director, National Service and Legislative Headquarters, Disabled American Veterans; Lauren Augustine, Legislative Associate, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; and, Patricia Hayes, Ph.D., Chief Consultant for Women’s Health Services, Office of Patient Care Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Susan McCutcheon, R.N., Ed.D., National Mental Health Director for Family Services, Women’s Mental Health, and Military Sexual Trauma, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and, Curtis Coy, Deputy Under Secretary for Economic Opportunity, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See “Examining Access and Quality of Care and Services for Women Veterans,” Serial No. 114–18.

Full Committee Business Meeting—Business Meeting: Motion To Issue a Subpoena to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, To Produce Complete MSPB and EEO Files From the Regional Office in Philadelphia to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs

On April 30, 2015, the Full Committee met to address the motion to subpoena the Department of Veterans Affairs to produce complete MSPB and EEO files from the Philadelphia VA Regional Office.

There were no testimonies provided. See, “Business Meeting: Motion to Issue a Subpoena to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, to produce complete MSPB and EEO files from the Regional Office in Philadelphia to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.”

Full Committee Hearing—Assessing the Promise and Progress of the Choice Program

On May 13, 2015, the Full Committee met in open session to conduct a Full Committee oversight hearing on the Choice program created by the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–146).

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: Donna Hoffmeier, Program Officer, VA Services, Health Net Federal Services; David J. McIntyre Jr., President and Chief Executive Officer, TriWest Healthcare Alliance; and, the Honorable Sloan Gibson, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: James Tuchschmidt, M.D., Interim Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: Darin Selnick, Senior Veterans Affairs Advisor, Concerned Veterans for America; Carlos Fuentes, Senior Legislative Associate, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Roscoe G. Butler, Deputy Director for Health Care, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Joseph A. Violante, National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; and, Christopher Neiweem, Legislative Associate, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans.

Full Committee Hearing—Joint Hearing of the House and Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committees To Receive the Legislative Presentation of Multiple Veterans Service Organizations (PVA, AMVETS, MOAA, MOPH, IAVA, VVA, BVA and NCOA)

On May 20, 2015, the Full Committee participated in a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee to receive testimony from multiple veterans’ organizations (PVA, AMVETS, MOAA, MOPH, IAVA, VVA, BVA and NCOA) on their 2015 legislative priorities.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: Al Kovach, National President, Paralyzed Veterans of America; CDR Larry E. Via, National Commander, AMVETS; COL Robert F. Norton, U.S. Army (Ret.), Deputy Director, Government Relations, Military Officers Association of America; J. Patrick Little, National Commander, Military Order of the Purple Heart; John Rowan, National President, Vietnam Veterans of America; Glenn Minney, Director of Government Relations, Blinded Veterans Association; Paul Rieckhoff, Founder and CEO, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; and Sergeant Major H. Gene Overstreet, USMC (Ret.), President, Non Commissioned Officers Association. This hearing was hosted by the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee and therefore does not have a House Serial No.

Site Visit—Cincinnati, OH

On June 9, 2015, the Chairman for the Full Committee traveled to Cincinnati, Ohio, to conduct an oversight visit to the Cincinnati VA Medical Center with Rep. Brad Wenstrup of Ohio. The trip focused on wait times, the utilization of the Choice program and other sources of non-VA care, and ways to strengthen VA’s purchased care options.

Full Committee Hearing—The State of VA’s Fiscal Year 2015, Budget

On June 25, 2015, the Full Committee held a hearing to examine the VA’s Budget for the 2015 Fiscal Year.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: the Honorable Sloan Gibson, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: James Tuchschmidt, M.D., Interim Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Edward Murray, Acting Assistant Secretary for Management and Interim Chief Financial Officer, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and, Gregory Giddens, Principal Executive Director Office of Acquisitions, Logistics, and Construction, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See “The State of VA’s Fiscal Year 2015, Budget,” Serial No. 114–29.
Full Committee Hearing—Exploring VA’s Administration of Individual Unemployability Benefits

On July 15, 2015, the Full Committee held a hearing to examine the individual unemployment benefits under the VA’s Administration.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Daniel Bertoni, Director, Education, Workforce, and Income Security, U.S. Government Accountability Office; Bradley Flohr, Senior Advisor, Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration; Paul R. Varela, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; and Ian de Planque, Legislative Director, The American Legion. See “Exploring VA’s Administration of Individual Unemployability Benefits,” Serial No. 114–32.

Full Committee Hearing—To Receive the Secretary’s Testimony Regarding the Pending VA Health Care Budget Shortfall and System Shutdown

On July 22, 2015, the Full Committee held a hearing to receive testimony regarding the Department’s notification of a $3 billion budget shortfall in the Medical Services account that will result in a nationwide shutdown of VA hospital operations if Congress does not act before August, 2015.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: the Honorable Robert McDonald, Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: James Tuchschmidt, M.D., Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See “To Receive the Secretary’s Testimony regarding the Pending VA Health Care Budget Shortfall and System Shutdown,” Serial No. 114–34.

Full Committee Hearing—A Call for System-Wide Change: Evaluating the Independent Assessment of the Veterans Health Administration

On October 7, 2015, the Full Committee held a hearing to discuss and evaluate the independent assessment of the VA Health Administration.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: the Honorable Robert A. McDonald, Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: the Honorable David J. Shulkin M.D., Under Secretary for Health, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Testimony was also provided by Richard J. Byrne, Senior Vice President, The MITRE Corporation; and, Brett P. Giroir M.D., Senior Fellow, Texas Medical Center Health Policy Institute. See “A Call for System-Wide Change: Evaluating the Independent Assessment of the Veterans Health Administration,” Serial No. 114–37.


On October 21, 2015, the Full Committee held a hearing to assess and examine the VA Office of Inspector General’s Report of in-
appropriate use of position and the misuse of relocation program and incentives.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Linda Halliday, Deputy Inspector General, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. Danny Pummill Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs was invited to testify but did not appear. Mr. Pummill was invited to be accompanied by Ms. Diana Rubens Director, Philadelphia and Wilmington Region Office, Veterans Benefit Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Robert McKenrick Director, Los Angeles Regional Office, Veterans Benefit Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Kimberly Graves Director, St. Paul Regional Office, Veterans Benefit Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Antione Waller Director, Baltimore Regional Office, Veterans Benefit Administration, U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs. These individuals did also not appear. See “An Examination of the VA Office of Inspector General’s Final Report on the Inappropriate Use of Position and the Misuse of the Relocation Program and Incentives,” Serial No. 114–38.

**Full Committee Business Meeting—Motion To Issue Subpoenas to Employees of U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, To Compel Them To Appear and Provide Testimony to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs on the Inspector General’s Final Report, Entitled “Inappropriate Use of Position and the Misuse of the Relocation Program and Incentives.”**

On October 21, 2015, the Full Committee met in open session to conduct a motion to issue subpoenas to employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and compel them to appear and provide testimony to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs on the Inspector General’s final report.

**Full Committee Hearing—“Testimony of Subpoenaed Witnesses on the Department of Veterans Affairs Alleged Misuse of Relocation Program and Incentives”**

On November 2, 2015, the Full Committee held a hearing to hear testimony from subpoenaed witnesses of the Department of Veterans Affairs on the misuse of relocation program and incentives.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Danny Pummill, Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefit Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Accompanied by: Diana Rubens, Director, Philadelphia and Wilmington Regional Offices, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Robert McKenrick, Director, Los Angeles Regional Office, Veterans Benefit Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Kimberly Graves, Director, St. Paul Regional Office, Veterans Benefit Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and, Antione Waller, Director, Baltimore Regional Office, Veterans Benefit Administration, U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs. Testimony was also provided by Linda Halliday, Deputy Inspector General, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The Honorable Allison Hickey, Former
Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefit Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs was invited to provide testimony but did not appear. See, “Testimony of Subpoenaed Witnesses on the Department of Veterans Affairs Alleged Misuse of Relocation Program and Incentives,” Serial No. 114–41.

Full Committee Hearing—Choice Consolidation: Assessing VA's Plan To Improve Care in the Community

On November 18, 2015, the Full Committee held a hearing on the Department of Veterans Affairs’ (VA’s) plan to consolidate non-VA care programs.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: the Honorable Sloan Gibson, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: the Honorable David J. Shulkin, M.D., Under Secretary for Health, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Baligh Yehia, M.D., Assistant Deputy Undersecretary for Health for Community Care, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and, Joe Dalpiaz, Network Director, Heart of Texas Health Care Network, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See “Choice Consolidation: Assessing VA’s Plan to Improve Care in the Community,” Serial No. 114–45.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
FULL COMMITTEE LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES
Second Session
AMERICAN HEROES COLA ACT OF 2015
(H.R. 677)

Summary

H.R. 677, American Heroes COLA Act of 2015, authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), in lieu of furnishing a headstone or marker to a deceased individual, to furnish a medallion or other device to signify the deceased individual’s veteran status, to be attached to a headstone or marker furnished at private expense. A deceased individual, for the purposes of such provision, is an individual who: (1) served in the Armed Forces on or after April 6, 1917; and (2) is eligible for a headstone or marker, or who would be eligible but for his or her date of death.

H.R. 677 would state “Claim” and “formal claim” (a claim submitted on a DOD-prescribed form) are defined for purposes of provisions relating to claims for benefits under laws administered by the VA.

H.R. 677 would establish that the VA shall report quarterly to Congress for five years regarding submitted VA claims. Each report shall include the total number of: claims submitted, including the total number of informal and formal claims; forms indicating an intent to file a benefits claim; claim notification letters that included an invitation to submit an additional formal claim and the total number of claimants who submitted such additional formal claim; electronically filed claims submitted; and fully-developed claims
submitted. It is the sense of Congress that the VA should develop a form for increasing or reopening a claim that does not require re-submittal of information previously submitted on a formal claim form.

H.R. 677 would establish that the VA may pay burial and funeral expenses, accrued benefits, dependency and indemnity compensation, and non-service connected disability or death pension amounts to a survivor of a veteran who has not filed a formal claim if the record contains sufficient evidence to establish the survivor’s entitlement to such benefits. The date of receipt of such benefits application shall be the earlier of: the date on which the survivor notifies the VA of the veteran’s death through a death certificate or other relevant medical evidence indicating that the death was due to a service-connected or compensable disability, or the date on which any other federal agency notifies the VA of the veteran’s death. The bill requires the VA to report to Congress on benefits paid pursuant to covered claims.

H.R. 677 would establish that the VA shall provide the following claimants priority when processing veterans benefits claims: veterans who have attained the age of 70; veterans who are terminally ill; veterans with life-threatening illnesses; homeless veterans; veterans who were awarded the Medal of Honor; veterans who are former prisoners of war; veterans whose claims are being reviewed again in relation to a previously denied claim relating to military sexual trauma; veterans who the VA determines, on a case-by-case basis, are seriously or very seriously injured; and veterans whom the VA determines should otherwise be given priority for good cause.

H.R. 677 would establish that if a veteran has submitted a medical opinion or report from a private physician in support of a disability compensation claim, the VA may not order a medical examination by a VA physician unless the VA provides the veteran with an explanation of why: (1) the submitted medical opinion or report was not sufficiently complete, and (2) additional medical evidence is necessary. This provision shall apply to medical evidence submitted one year after enactment of this Act by veterans who have not submitted any prior VA disability compensation claims.

H.R. 677 would establish that during the nine-year period beginning on December 1, 2016, whenever there is an increase in benefit amounts payable under title II (Old Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance) of the Social Security Act, the VA shall increase by the same percentage the amounts payable as veterans’ disability compensation, additional compensation for dependents, the clothing allowance for certain disabled adult children, and dependency and indemnity compensation for surviving spouses and children.

H.R. 677 would establish that the process for appointment of fiduciaries for veterans is revised. If the VA determines a beneficiary to be mentally incompetent for purposes of appointing a fiduciary, the VA shall provide the beneficiary with a written statement detailing the reasons for such determination. A beneficiary may appeal such determination. A beneficiary for whom the VA appoints a fiduciary may, at any time, request the VA to remove such fiduciary and appoint a new one. The VA shall comply with a good faith request if the fiduciary: (1) has received a fee from the bene-
ficiary and a volunteer fiduciary is available to assist the beneficiary, or (2) is not acting in the beneficiary’s best interests. The VA shall ensure that any removal or new appointment shall not delay or interrupt the beneficiary’s receipt of benefits. A VA-appointed fiduciary shall act independently of the VA and in the interest of the beneficiary. A veteran may predesignate a fiduciary. If a beneficiary does not designate a fiduciary the VA shall appoint a fiduciary who is: (1) a relative, (2) a guardian, or (3) authorized to act on the beneficiary’s behalf under a durable power of attorney. The VA, if it determines that a commission is necessary to obtain the services of a fiduciary in the best interests of a beneficiary, may authorize a fiduciary appointed by the VA to obtain from the monthly benefits provided to the beneficiary a reasonable commission for fiduciary services rendered. Such commission shall not exceed the lesser of: (1) 3% of the monthly monetary benefits paid on behalf of the beneficiary to the fiduciary, or (2) $35. A commission may not be authorized for a fiduciary who receives any other form of remuneration or payment in connection with rendering fiduciary services for the beneficiary. Temporary benefit payments to a person having custody and control of an incompetent or minor beneficiary are permitted. Specified state and local agencies and nonprofit social service agencies may act as fiduciaries. The VA shall maintain a list of state and local agencies and nonprofit social service agencies that are qualified to act as a fiduciary. The bill requires the investigation for the certification of a fiduciary to include criminal and credit background checks. A background check shall be performed each time a person is proposed as a fiduciary. A person convicted of a federal or state offense may serve as a fiduciary only if the VA finds such person to be appropriate under the circumstances. A fiduciary shall disclose the number of beneficiaries on whose behalf the fiduciary acts. The VA shall: (1) maintain records of any person whose fiduciary status has been revoked, and (2) notify a beneficiary within 14 days after learning that the fiduciary has been convicted of a specified crime. The VA shall investigate alleged misuse of benefits, and if substantiated, transmit such information to the Department of Justice and each federal agency that pays benefits to fiduciaries or beneficiaries. The VA shall, when determining whether a proposed fiduciary must furnish a bond, consider: (1) the existence of any familial or other personal relationship between the proposed fiduciary and the beneficiary, and (2) the care the proposed fiduciary has taken to protect the beneficiary’s interests. Each Veterans Benefits Administration regional office shall maintain specified fiduciary information. A fiduciary must (currently, may) file an annual accounting of the administration of beneficiary benefits. The VA shall conduct annual random audits of fiduciaries who receive a commission for such service.

H.R. 677 would establish that the Board of Veterans’ Appeals shall, for purposes of scheduling a veteran’s appeal hearing at the earliest possible date, determine whether to provide such hearing: (1) at its principal location or at another VA facility or other federal facility within the regional VA’s area, and (2) through the use of video conferencing or by an appellant’s personal appearance. (Current law merely permits an appellant to request that a hearing
be at the Board’s principal location or at a VA facility located within the regional VA’s area.) The Board shall notify the appellant of such decisions. Upon notification, the appellant may request a different location or type of hearing, and the Board shall grant such request while ensuring that the hearing is scheduled at the earliest possible date.

H.R. 677 would establish that the Veterans Benefits Act of 2003 is amended to extend until December 31, 2017, the VA’s authority to provide for persons other than VA employees (i.e., contract physicians) to conduct medical disability examinations of applicants for VA benefits. A VA-contracted physician may conduct such examinations at any location in any state, the District of Columbia, or a Commonwealth, territory, or possession of the United States so long as the examination is within the scope of the contract and the physician has a current unrestricted license to practice his or her health care profession; is not barred from practicing such health care profession in any state, the District of Columbia, or a U.S. commonwealth, territory, or possession; and is performing authorized duties for the VA pursuant to a contract.

The Veterans’ Benefits Improvement Act of 1996 is amended to provide similar authorities for examination locations under the pilot program authorizing the VA to use contract physicians to perform medical disability examinations of applicants for benefits carried out through the Under Secretary for Benefits.

H.R. 677 would establish that the VA shall: (1) carry out a five-year pilot program to provide a faster disability compensation appeals process, and (2) inform claimants about such program. Appeals filed under the pilot program are described as “fully developed appeals.” A claimant may elect to file a fully developed appeal by filing with the VA: (1) a notice of disagreement along with the claimant’s written election to have the appeal determined under the pilot program, (2) all necessary evidence, and (3) a statement of the claim’s supporting argument. A claimant who elects to file a claim under the pilot program may elect to revert to the standard appeals process at any time. Such reversion shall be final. Such a claimant or an electing claimant who is later determined to be ineligible for the pilot program shall revert to the standard appeals process without any penalty other than the loss of docket number.

The VA shall transfer jurisdiction over a fully developed appeal directly to the Board of Veterans’ Appeals. The Board shall: maintain fully developed appeals on a separate docket; hear fully developed appeals in the order received; decide not more than one fully developed appeal for each four traditional appeals decided, though this ratio may be adjusted for fairness purposes after one year; and decide each fully developed appeal within one year of a claimant’s filing the notice of disagreement. A claimant may not submit or identify to the Board any new evidence relating to a fully developed appeal after filing such appeal unless the claimant reverts to the standard appeals process. The Board shall establish an office to develop necessary federal records, independent medical opinions, and new medical exams that the Board determines are necessary to decide a fully developed appeal. The Board may not provide hearings for fully developed appeals.
H.R. 677 would establish that the VA shall take steps to ensure that regional offices certify VA Form 9, Appeal to Board of Veterans' Appeals forms within one year of receipt.

H.R. 677 would establish that a commission or task force is established to evaluate the backlog of VA disability claims and appeals. The commission or task force shall: (1) carry out a comprehensive evaluation of the claims backlog and the appeals process and provide Congress and the President with initial, interim, and final reports; and (2) terminate 60 days after submission of the final report.

H.R. 677 would establish that the Department of Defense (DOD) shall accept additional documentation for verifying active duty service as a coastwise merchant seaman between December 7, 1941–December 31, 1946, for purposes of veterans' burial benefits and medal and decorations eligibility, including: in the case of an individual who served on a coastwise merchant vessel seeking such recognition for whom no applicable Coast Guard shipping or discharge form, ship logbook, merchant mariner's document or Z-card, or other official employment record is available, applicable Social Security Administration records, together with validated testimony given by the individual or the primary next of kin that the individual performed such service between December 7, 1941–December 31, 1946; and in the case of such an individual for whom such employment record has been destroyed or is otherwise unavailable, other official documentation demonstrating that the individual performed such service between December 7, 1941–December 31, 1946. (These individuals shall not be entitled to other benefits based upon such service.) DOD, when determining whether to recognize service performed during such period, shall recognize masters of seagoing vessels or other command officers who were authorized to document an individual for purposes of hiring for, or discharging from, the merchant marine. DOD shall verify that an individual performed such qualifying service under honorable conditions without regard to an individual's sex, age, or disability.

H.R. 677 would establish that the VA shall designate at least one U.S. city each year as an “American World War II City” based on the city's: (1) contributions to the war effort during World War II; and (2) efforts to preserve the history of such contributions, including through establishment of preservation organizations or museums, restoration of World War II facilities, and recognition of World War II veterans. Wilmington, North Carolina, is designated as the first such city.

H.R. 677 would establish that Congress: (1) expresses its appreciation to the men and women left permanently wounded, ill, or injured as a result of their service in the Armed Forces; and (2) supports the annual recognition of permanently disabled American veterans.

H.R. 677 would establish that the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 is amended to extend through December 31, 2021, the pilot program of providing reintegration and readjustment services in group retreat settings to certain women veterans recently separated from military service.
Legislative History

H.R. 677 was introduced by Representative Ralph Abraham on February 3, 2015, and referred to the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee. Representative Dina Titus was the only original cosponsor.

On April 14, 2015 the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a legislative hearing on H.R. 677 and received testimony from the following witnesses: The Honorable Chellie Pingree, U.S. House of Representatives; Mr. David R. McLenachen, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Disability Assistance, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. McLenachen was accompanied by Ms. Laura H. Eskenazi, Executive-in-Charge and Vice Chairman, Board of Veterans’ Appeals, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. David J. Barrans, Assistant General Counsel, Office of General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Zachary Hearn, Deputy Director for Claims, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Mr. Blake C. Ortner, Deputy Government Relations Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Mr. Paul R. Varela, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Ronald B. Abrams, Joint Executive Director, National Veterans Legal Services Program; Mr. Kenneth M. Carpenter, Founding Member, National Organization of Veterans’ Advocates.

On May 14, 2015 the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs met in open session and ordered H.R. 677 to be favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On September 17, 2015 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs met in an open session and an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 677 was offered by Rep. Abraham of Louisiana and was adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 677 was offered by Rep. Titus of Nevada and was not adopted by the Full Committee by roll call. The amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 677, as amended was adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. H.R. 677, as amended passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably reported to the Full House by voice vote. The Committee Report was filed on February 1, 2016 (H. Rept. 114–405).

On February 9, 2016, the House agreed on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 677, as amended by voice vote.

On February 10, 2016, H.R. 677 was received in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

TO DESIGNATE THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS’ AFFAIRS COMMUNITY-BASED OUTPATIENT CLINIC IN NEWARK, OHIO, AS THE DANIEL L. KINNARD VA CLINIC

(H.R. 960)

Summary

H.R. 960 would establish the Department of Veterans Affairs community based outpatient clinic in Newark, Ohio, shall be known as the “Daniel L. Kinnard VA Clinic.”
Legislative History

H.R. 960 was introduced by Representative Patrick Tiberi on February 12, 2015, and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had 14 cosponsors, 12 of which were original cosponsors.

On May 23, 2016, the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 960 by voice vote.

On May 24, 2016, H.R. 960 was received in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

CAREER-READY STUDENT VETERANS ACT

(H.R. 2360)

Summary

H.R. 2360, Career-Ready Student Veterans Act, would add the following new criteria for state approval, with respect to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) educational assistance, of applications of educational institutions providing veterans with non-accredited courses: a program designed to prepare an individual for state licensure or certification must meet any state instructional curriculum licensure or certification requirements; or a program designed to prepare an individual for employment pursuant to standards developed by a state board or agency in an occupation requiring approval or licensure must be approved or licensed by that state board or agency. The VA may waive either of these two requirements if: the educational institution is accredited by an agency or association recognized by the Department of Education; the program did not meet the requirements at any time during the two-year period preceding the waiver date; the waiver furthers the purposes of the educational assistance programs or would further the education interests of individuals eligible for assistance under such programs; and the educational institution does not provide any incentive payment based on securing enrollments or financial aid to any persons or entities engaged in student recruiting or admission activities or in making decisions regarding the award of student financial assistance, except for recruitment of foreign students residing in foreign countries who are ineligible for federal student assistance. The VA shall submit to Congress notice of, and justification for, a waiver within 30 days of issuance. The VA shall disapprove a course of education unless the educational institution providing it discloses publicly any conditions or additional requirements, including training, experience, or exams, required to obtain the license, certification, or approval for which the course is designed to provide preparation. If after enrollment in a course subject to disapproval an individual pursues one or more courses of education at the same educational institution while remaining continuously enrolled, such course or courses shall not be subject to disapproval by reason of this Act.

Legislative History

H.R. 2360 was introduced by Representative Mark Takano on May 15, 2015 and was referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had 7 cosponsors.
On June 2, 2015 the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a legislative hearing on H.R. 2360 and received testimony from the following witnesses: The Honorable Bill Flores, U.S. House of Representatives, 17th Congressional District, Texas; The Honorable Paul Cook, U.S. House of Representatives, 8th Congressional District, California; The Honorable Sean Patrick Maloney, U.S. House of Representatives, 18th Congressional District, New York; Mr. Paul R. Varela Assistant National Legislative Director Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Brendon Gehrke Senior Legislative Associate National Legislative Service Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Mr. Steve Gonzalez Assistant Director Veterans Employment and Education Division The American Legion; Mr. David Borer General Counsel American Federation of Government Employees, AFL–CIO; Mr. Christopher Neiweem Legislative Associate Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; Mr. Rick Weidman Executive Director Government Affairs Vietnam Veterans of America; Mr. Curtis L. Coy Deputy Under Secretary for Economic Opportunity Veterans Benefits Administration U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Ms. Cathy Mitrano Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Resource Management Human Resources and Administration U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Teresa W. Gerton Acting Assistant Secretary Veterans’ Employment and Training Service U.S. Department of Labor; Dr. Susan S. Kelly Director Transition to Veterans Program Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness U.S. Department of Defense.

On June 25, 2015 the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in an open session and an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 2360 was offered by Rep. Mark Takano of California and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 2360, as amended passed the EO Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On September 17, 2015 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs met in an open session and H.R. 2360, as amended passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote. The Committee Report was filed on November 16, 2015 (H. Rept. 114–336).

On February 9, 2016 the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 2360, as amended by voice vote.

On February 10, 2016 H.R. 2360 was received in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

TO AMEND TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE, TO IMPROVE THE PROVISION OF ADULT DAY HEALTH CARE SERVICES FOR VETERANS

(H.R. 2460)

Summary

H.R. 2460, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of adult day health care services for veterans, would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to enter into an agreement or a contract with each state home to pay for adult day health care for a veteran eligible for, but not receiving, nursing home care. The veteran must need such care either specifically for a service-connected disability, or, if not specifically for one, the vet-
eran must have a service-connected disability rated 70% or more. Payment under each agreement or contract between the VA and a state home must equal 65% of the payment that the VA would otherwise pay to the state home if the veteran were receiving nursing home care.

Legislative History

H.R. 2460 was introduced by Representative Lee Zeldin on May 19, 2015 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had 53 cosponsors.

On April 20, 2016 the Subcommittee on Health held a legislative hearing on H.R. 2460 and received testimony from the following witnesses: Honorable Lee M. Zeldin, U.S. House of Representatives, 1st Congressional District of New York; the Honorable Mike Bost, U.S. House of Representatives, 12th Congressional District of Illinois; the Honorable Ann M. Kuster, U.S. House of Representatives, 2nd Congressional District of New Hampshire; the Honorable Elise M. Stefanik, U.S. House of Representatives, 21st Congressional District of New York; and, the Honorable Jackie Walorski, U.S. House of Representatives, 2nd Congressional District of Indiana; Diane M. Zumatto, National Legislative Director, AMVETS; Shurhonda Y. Love, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Fred S. Sganga, Legislative Officer, National Association of State Veterans Homes; Maureen McCarthy M.D., Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Patient Care Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Susan Blauert, Chief Counsel, Health Care Law Group, Office of General Counsel, on behalf of U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On April 29, 2016 the Subcommittee on Health met in an open session and ordered H.R. 2460 to be forwarded favorably to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On May 18, 2016 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs met in an open session and a motion to favorably report H.R. 2460 to the House was offered by Ranking Member Brown and agreed to via voice vote.

On May 23, 2016 the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 2460 by voice vote.

On May 24, 2016 H.R. 2460 was received in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

TO NAME THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMUNITY-BASED OUTPATIENT CLINIC IN SEVIERVILLE, TENNESSEE, THE DANNIE A. CARR VETERANS OUTPATIENT CLINIC

(H.R. 2814)

Summary

H.R. 2814 would designate the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic located at 1124 Blanton Drive, Sevierville, Tennessee, as the “Dannie A. Carr Veterans Outpatient Clinic.”
Legislative History

H.R. 2814 was introduced by Representative David Roe on June 17, 2015 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. This bill had no cosponsors.

On March 1, 2016 the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill by voice vote.

On May 18, 2016 H.R. 2814 was discharged from the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs by Unanimous Consent and passed the Senate without amendment by Unanimous Consent.

On May 24, 2016 H.R. 2814 was presented to the President.

On June 3, 2016 H.R. 2814 was signed by the president and became Public Law No: 114–164.

**FEMALE VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION ACT**

(H.R. 2915)

**Summary**

H.R. 2915, Female Veteran Suicide Prevention Act, would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to identify: (1) VA mental health care and suicide prevention programs that are most effective for women veterans, and (2) those programs with the highest satisfaction rates among women veterans.

H.R. 2915 would state that it is the sense of Congress that veterans who experience combat-related mental health wounds should have immediate and consistent access to comprehensive mental health care. The VA shall: establish standards and procedures to ensure that each covered veteran may access VA mental health care in a manner that fully accommodates the veteran's obligation to not improperly disclose classified information; and disseminate guidance to Veterans Health Administration employees, including mental health professionals, regarding these standards and procedures: “Covered veteran” means a veteran who: (1) is enrolled in the VA health care system; (2) is seeking mental health treatment; and (3) in the course of serving in the Armed Forces participated in a sensitive (classified) mission or served in a sensitive unit primarily involved in training for the conduct of, or conducting, special activities or classified missions.

Legislative History

H.R. 2915 was introduced by Representative Julia Brownley on June 25, 2015 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The bill had 21 cosponsors.

On July 14, 2015 the Subcommittee on Health held a legislative hearing on H.R. 2915 and received testimony from the following witnesses: the Honorable Tim Walberg, U.S. House of Representatives, 7th Congressional District of Michigan; the Honorable Sean Duffy, U.S. House of Representatives, 7th Congressional District of Wisconsin; the Honorable Steve Stivers, U.S. House of Representatives, 15th Congressional District of Ohio; the Honorable Kyrsten Sinema, U.S. House of Representatives, 9th Congressional District of Arizona; the Honorable Doug Collins, U.S. House of Representatives, 9th Congressional District of Georgia; the Honorable Mike Coffman, U.S. House of Representatives, 6th Congressional District
of Colorado; the Honorable Jeff Denham, U.S. House of Representatives, 10th Congressional District of California; the Honorable Charles Boustany, U.S. House of Representatives, 3rd Congressional District of Louisiana; and, the Honorable Brad Wenstrup, U.S. House of Representatives, 2nd Congressional District of Ohio; Ian de Planque, Legislative Director, The American Legion; Adrian Atizado, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; and, Carlos Fuentes, Senior Legislative Associate, National Legislative Service Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Madhulika Agarwal, M.D., M.P.H., Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Policy and Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Janet P. Murphy, M.B.A., Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Jessica Tanner, General Attorney Office of General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On July 22, 2015 the Subcommittee on Health met in an open session and ordered H.R. 2915 to be forwarded favorably to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On September 17, 2015 an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 2915 was offered by Rep. Brownley of California and was adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. H.R. 2915, as amended passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote. The Committee Report was filed on December 3, 2015 (H. Rept. 114–365).

On February 9, 2016 the House agreed to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 2915, as amended by voice vote.

On February 10, 2016 H.R. 2915 was received in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, AND HEALTHCARE IMPROVEMENT ACT

(H.R. 3016)

Summary

H.R. 3016, Veterans Employment, Education, and Healthcare Improvement Act, would include podiatrists within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) definition of physician, and increases their pay grade to match other VA physician compensation.

H.R. 3016 would make the priority for enrollment in the VA health care system given to Medal of Honor recipients shall increase from third to first, regardless of the date on which the medal is awarded. Medal of honor recipients shall be eligible for VA: (1) hospital, nursing home, and domiciliary care; (2) extended care services for non-service-connected disabilities, without having to make a copayment for such services; and (3) medications, without having to make a copayment for such medications.

H.R. 3016 would state that the VA may provide the newborn child of a woman veteran receiving VA maternity care with post-delivery care services for at most 42 days (currently 7 days) after the child’s birth if the veteran delivered the child in a VA facility or another facility with which VA has a contract for such services.
H.R. 3016 would state that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) shall periodically audit elements of the Veterans Health Administration budget.

H.R. 3016 would state that the VA shall: (1) conduct outreach to inform veterans of how to resolve credit issues caused by a delayed payment of a claim for emergency hospital care, medical services, or other emergency health care furnished through a non-VA provider; and (2) establish a toll-free telephone number for veterans to report such issues to the VA's Chief Business Office. The GAO shall evaluate the effectiveness of the Chief Business Office in providing timely payment of a proper invoice for emergency hospital care, medical services, or other emergency health care furnished through non-VA providers by the required payment date.

H.R. 3016 would state that the VA shall carry out a five-year pilot program to assess the effectiveness of addressing veterans' post-deployment mental health and post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms through the therapeutic medium of educating those veterans in the training and handling of service dogs for veterans with disabilities. The program shall be carried out through contracts with appropriate nongovernmental entities located in close proximity to between three and five VA medical centers. Each entity shall be certified in service dog training and have a training area for educating veterans with mental health conditions in service dog training and handling.

Legislative History

H.R. 3016 was introduced by Representative Brad Wenstrup on July 9, 2015 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The bill had 15 cosponsors, 5 of which were original cosponsors.

On July 14, 2015 the Subcommittee on Health held a legislative hearing on H.R. 3016 and received testimony from the following witnesses: Honorable Tim Walberg, U.S. House of Representatives, 7th Congressional District of Michigan; the Honorable Sean Duffy, U.S. House of Representatives, 7th Congressional District of Wisconsin; the Honorable Steve Stivers, U.S. House of Representatives, 15th Congressional District of Ohio; the Honorable Kyrsten Sinema, U.S. House of Representatives, 9th Congressional District, Arizona; the Honorable Doug Collins, U.S. House of Representatives, 9th Congressional District of Georgia; the Honorable Mike Coffman, U.S. House of Representatives, 6th Congressional District of Colorado; the Honorable Jeff Denham, U.S. House of Representatives, 10th Congressional District of California; the Honorable Charles Boustany, U.S. House of Representatives, 3rd Congressional District of Louisiana; and, the Honorable Brad Wenstrup, U.S. House of Representatives, 2nd Congressional District of Ohio; Ian de Planque, Legislative Director, The American Legion; Adrian Atizado, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; and, Carlos Fuentes, Senior Legislative Associate, National Legislative Service Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Madhulika Agarwal, M.D., M.P.H., Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Policy and Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Janet P. Murphy, M.B.A., Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Oper-
On July 22, 2015 the Subcommittee on Health met in open session and ordered H.R. 3016 to be favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On September 17, 2015 an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to H.R. 3016 was offered by Rep. Wenstrup of Ohio and was adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3016 was offered by Rep. Roe of Tennessee and was adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3016 was offered by Rep. Takano of California and was not adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. An additional amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3016 was offered by Rep. Takano of California and was not adopted by the Full Committee by roll call. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3016 was offered by Rep. Titus of Nevada and was not adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. The amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3016, as amended was adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. H.R. 3016, as amended passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably reported to the Full House by voice vote. The Committee Report was filed on December 1, 2015 (H.R. Rept. 114–358).

On February 9, 2016 the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 3016, as amended by voice vote.

On February 10, 2016 H.R. 3016 was received in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

CONSTRUCTION REFORM ACT OF 2016

(H.R. 3106)

Summary

H.R. 3106, Construction Reform Act of 2016, would require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to use industry standards, standard designs, and best practices in carrying out medical facility construction. A super construction project is one for the construction, alteration, or acquisition of a medical facility involving a total expenditure of more than $100 million (but does not include an acquisition by exchange). The VA shall provide, on a non-reimbursable basis, a non-VA federal entity with: (1) design, planning, and construction assistance; (2) project documents; and (3) other assistance upon request. With respect to a proposed change to a contract entered into by a non-VA federal entity with which the VA has entered into an agreement that is estimated at a value of less than $250,000, the entity shall issue a final decision regarding such change within 30 days. With respect to a proposed contract change estimated at a value of $250,000 or more: the VA may make recommendations to the entity; the VA may issue the final decision regarding the change within 30 days after the entity proposes it; and if the VA does not issue a final decision within 60 days after the entity proposes the contract change, the entity shall issue a final
decision regarding the change no later than 90 days after it proposes the change. The VA shall ensure that each VA employee with responsibilities relating to the construction or alteration of medical facilities undergoes ongoing professional training and development. The VA is prohibited from: obligating or expending funds for advance planning or design for any super construction project until 60 days after congressional notification, obligating funds for a major medical facility project or a super construction project by more than 10% of the amount approved by law unless certain congressional committees approve the obligation, or using bid savings amounts or funds for other than their original purpose before 30 days after notifying those committees unless each committee approves the obligation. The VA shall enter into a contract with an appropriate non-department federal entity to conduct an external forensic audit of: (1) the medical center construction project in Aurora, Colorado; and (2) the expenditures relating to any major medical facility or super construction project when such expenditures exceed the amount approved by law by more than 25%. The VA must complete a 10-year master plan for: (1) each existing VA medical facility by December 31, 2016, and (2) each new VA medical facility by not later than the earlier of the date on which activation is completed or the date of the facility's formal dedication. H.R. 3106 would establish in the Office of Inspector General an Assistant Inspector General for Construction who shall be responsible for conducting, supervising, and coordinating audits, evaluations, and investigations of the planning, design, contracting, and construction of VA facilities and infrastructure, including major and minor construction projects and leases.

Legislative History

H.R. 3106 was introduced by Chairman Jeff Miller on July 16, 2015 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had 2 cosponsors.

On July 14, 2015 the Subcommittee on Health held a legislative hearing on H.R. 3106 and received testimony from the following witnesses: Honorable Tim Walberg, U.S. House of Representatives, 7th Congressional District of Michigan; the Honorable Sean Duffy, U.S. House of Representatives, 7th Congressional District of Wisconsin; the Honorable Steve Stivers, U.S. House of Representatives, 15th Congressional District of Ohio; the Honorable Kyrsten Sinema, U.S. House of Representatives, 9th Congressional District, Arizona; the Honorable Doug Collins, U.S. House of Representatives, 9th Congressional District of Georgia; the Honorable Mike Coffman, U.S. House of Representatives, 6th Congressional District of Colorado; the Honorable Jeff Denham, U.S. House of Representatives, 10th Congressional District of California; the Honorable Charles Boustany, U.S. House of Representatives, 3rd Congressional District of Louisiana; and, the Honorable Brad Wenstrup, U.S. House of Representatives, 2nd Congressional District of Ohio; Ian de Planque, Legislative Director, The American Legion; Adrian Atizado, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; and, Carlos Fuentes, Senior Legislative Associate, National Legislative Service Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Madhulika Agarwal, M.D., M.P.H., Deputy Under
Secretary for Health for Policy and Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Janet P. Murphy, M.B.A., Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Jessica Tanner, General Attorney Office of General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On July 22, 2015, the Subcommittee on Health met in an open session and an amendment to H.R. 3106 was offered by Rep. Mike Coffman of Colorado and was adopted by the Health Subcommittee by voice vote. H.R. 3106, as amended, passed the Health Subcommittee and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On September 17, 2015 the Committee on Veterans' Affairs met in open session and an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to H.R. 3106, as amended was offered by Chairman Miller of Florida and was adopted/not adopted. An Amendment to the A.N.S. to H.R. 3106, as amended was offered by Rep. Brownley of California and was adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3106, as amended was offered by Rep. Rice of New York and was adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. The amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3106, as amended was adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably reported to the Full Committee by voice vote. H.R. 3106, as amended passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably reported to the Full House by voice vote. The Committee Report was filed on December 3, 2015 (H. Rept. 114–364).

On February 9, 2016 the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 3106, as amended by voice vote.

On February 10, 2016 H.R. 3106 was received in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

VET ACT  
(H.R. 3216)

Summary

H.R. 3216, VET Act, would declare that, if a veteran who is enrolled in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care program requests a medical examination or treatment at an emergency department of a VA medical facility, the veteran shall be provided with: a medical screening examination to determine whether an emergency medical condition exists; and if an emergency condition exists, stabilizing medical treatment or transfer to another VA or non-VA medical facility. The VA is deemed to have met such requirements if it offers to transfer the veteran to another medical facility, informs the veteran of the transfer's risks and benefits, and the veteran refuses to consent to the transfer. If a non-stabilized emergency medical condition exists the VA hospital may not transfer the veteran unless: the veteran (or individual), after being made aware of the risks, makes a written transfer request; a physician certifies that the medical benefits of a transfer outweigh the risks to the veteran and, in the case of a woman in labor, to the unborn child; if a physician is not present in the emergency department at the time of transfer, a qualified medical person has made
such certification after a physician has determined that a transfer’s benefit outweighs the risk and a physician subsequently countersigns the qualified medical person’s certification; and the transfer is to a medical facility with the necessary treatment capacities. A VA or non-VA medical facility that has specialized capabilities or facilities (such as burn units, shock-trauma units, neonatal intensive care units, or, with respect to rural areas, regional referral centers) shall not refuse to accept a transfer if the facility has the capacity to treat the veteran. A VA or non-VA medical facility may not delay a medical screening examination or further medical examination and treatment in order to inquire about a veteran’s payment method or insurance status. The VA may not take adverse action against a VA employee because the employee refuses to authorize the transfer of an enrolled veteran with a non-stabilized emergency medical condition or because the employee reports a violation of this bill.

**Legislative History**

H.R. 3216 was introduced by Representative Dan Newhouse on July 27, 2015 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had 13 cosponsors, 3 of which were original cosponsors.

On June 23, 2016 the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs held a legislative hearing on H.R. 3216 and received testimony from the following witnesses: Honorable Doug Lamborn, U.S. House of Representatives, 1st Congressional District of Nevada; The Honorable Raul Ruiz, U.S. House of Representatives, 36th Congressional District of California; The Honorable Beto O’Rourke, U.S. House of Representatives, 16th Congressional District of Texas; The Honorable Ron DeSantis, U.S. House of Representatives, 6th Congressional District of Florida; The Honorable Ted Yoho, U.S. House of Representatives, 3rd Congressional District of Florida; The Honorable Jody Hice, U.S. House of Representatives, 10th Congressional District of Georgia; The Honorable Dan Newhouse, U.S. House of Representatives, 4th Congressional District of Washington; and The Honorable David Young, U.S. House of Representatives, 3rd Congressional District of Iowa; The Honorable Sloan Gibson, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Deputy Secretary Gibson was accompanied by Ms. Laura Eskenazi, Executive in Charge and Vice Chairman, Board of Veterans Appeals; Mr. David McLenachen, Deputy Under Secretary for Disability Assistance, Veterans Benefits Administration; and Dr. Maureen McCarthy, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health Patient Care Services, Veterans Health Administration within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Testimony was also provided by Mr. Raymond Kelley, Director, National Legislative Service of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Mr. Paul Varela, Assistant National Legislative Director with Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Carl Blake, Associate Executive Director of Government Relations with the Paralyzed Veterans of America; Mr. Louis J. Celli, Jr., Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division of The American Legion; and Mr. Rick Weidman, Executive Director for Policy and Government Affairs with the Vietnam Veterans of America; Statements for the Record were provided by the fol-

On September 21, 2016 the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs met in an open session and ordered H.R. 3216 to be favorably forwarded to the House by voice vote.

On September 26, 2016 the House agreed on a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 3216 by voice vote.

On September 27, 2016 H.R. 3216 was received in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

VA MEDICAL CENTER RECOVERY ACT

(H.R. 3234)

Summary

H.R. 3234, VA Medical Center Recovery Act, would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to publish in the Federal Register and on a publicly available VA Internet website a compilation of key health metrics for each VA medical center. The VA shall: (1) determine on a semiannual basis whether each medical center is satisfactory or underperforming; and (2) upon a determination of underperformance, send a rapid deployment team to the center to ensure that it achieves satisfactory performance as quickly as practicable. A rapid deployment team shall: identify the areas of the medical center that require improvement and whether the center follows directives and best practices; establish a performance remediation plan; review the status of any disciplinary actions taken at the center, any recommendations made by the VA Inspector General, and any Government Accountability Office findings; and provide appropriate training to the director and staff. The Inspector General of the VA shall prioritize investigations regarding underperforming medical centers. The Office of Accountability Review shall prioritize investigations of whistleblower retaliation regarding underperforming medical centers. H.R. 3234 would state that the VA shall seek to enter into partnerships with recognized schools of nursing to provide undergraduate nursing students enrolled in such schools with standardized training with respect to: the culture of the military and veterans; post-traumatic stress disorder; traumatic brain injury; amputation and assistive devices; environmental, chemical, and toxic exposure; substance use disorders; military sexual trauma; suicide; homelessness; serious illness at the end of life; and federal benefits, services, and resources for veterans.

Legislative History

On November 17, 2015 the Subcommittee on Health held a legislative hearing on H.R. 3234 and received testimony from the following witnesses: the Honorable Beto O’Rourke, U.S. House of Representatives, 16th Congressional District of Texas; the Honorable
Andy Barr, U.S. House of Representatives, 6th Congressional District of Kentucky; the Honorable Matt Cartwright, U.S. House of Representatives, 17th Congressional District of Pennsylvania; the Honorable Scott Peters, U.S. House of Representatives, 52nd Congressional District of California; the Honorable Martha Roby, U.S. House of Representatives, 2nd Congressional District of Alabama; the Honorable Jackie Walorski, U.S. House of Representatives, 2nd Congressional District of Indiana; the Honorable John Kline, U.S. House of Representatives, 2nd Congressional District of Minnesota; the Honorable Gus Bilirakis, U.S. House of Representatives, 12th Congressional District of Florida; Adrian Atizado, Deputy National Legislative, Director Disabled American Veterans; LaRanda D. Holt, Assistant Director for Women and Minority Veterans Outreach, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; and Carlos Fuentes, Senior Legislative Associate, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Janet Murphy, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Elias Hernandez, Chief Officer, Workforce Management and Consulting Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Harold Kudler, Chief Consultant for Mental Health Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Susan Blauert, Deputy Assistant General Counsel, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On February 9, 2016 the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 3234, as amended by voice vote. On February 10, 2016 H.R. 3234 was received in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

TO PROVIDE FOR THE CONVEYANCE OF LAND OF THE ILLIANA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS IN DANVILLE, ILLINOIS

(H.R. 3262)

Summary

H.R. 3262 would authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to convey to the Danville Area Community College of Danville, Illinois, all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to certain real property, including improvements, known as Building Number 48, which is part of the VA Illiana Health Care System. As consideration for such conveyance, the College shall convey to the United States all right, title, and interest in and to certain real property, including improvements, near the College Library Building.

Legislative History

H.R. 3262 was introduced by Representative John Shimkus on July 28, 2015 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had no cosponsors.

On December 8, 2015 the Subcommittee on Health held a legislative hearing on H.R. 3262 and received testimony from the following witnesses: the Honorable John Shimkus, U.S. House of Rep-
representatives, 15th Congressional District of Illinois; the Honorable Ted Lieu, U.S. House of Representatives, 33rd Congressional District, California; the Honorable John L. Mica, U.S. House of Representatives, 7th Congressional District of Florida; the Honorable Jerry McNerney, U.S. House of Representatives, 9th Congressional District of California; and the Honorable Mike Coffman, U.S. House of Representatives, 6th Congressional District of Colorado; Raymond C. Kelley, Director of the National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Howard Trace, Director of the National Library and Museum Division, The American Legion; Accompanied by: Louis Celli Jr., Director of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Stella S. Fiotes, Director of the Office of Construction and Facilities Management, Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Vince Kane, Special Assistant to the Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On February 9, 2016 the House agreed on a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 3262 by voice vote.
On February 22, 2016 the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs discharged H.R. 3262 by Unanimous Consent. H.R. 3262 passed the Senate without amendment by Unanimous Consent.
On February 25, 2016 H.R. 3262 was presented to the President.
On February 29, 2016 H.R. 3262 was signed by the President and became Public Law No: 114–129.

VETERANS MOBILITY SAFETY ACT OF 2016

(H.R. 3471)

Summary

H.R. 3471, Veterans Mobility Safety Act of 2016, would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to ensure that an eligible disabled veteran provided an automobile or other conveyance is given the opportunity to make personal selections relating to such conveyance. H.R. 3471 would state that the VA shall develop a comprehensive policy regarding quality standards for providers of modification services to veterans under the automobile adaptive equipment program. Such policy shall cover: (1) management of the automobile adaptive equipment program, (2) development and application of safety and quality standards for equipment and installation, (3) provider certification by a third party organization or manufacturer, (4) education and training of VA personnel, (5) provider compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and (6) allowance for veterans to receive modifications at their residence or location of choice. The VA shall: (1) within one year and at least every six years thereafter, update VHA Handbook 1173.4 in accordance with such policy; and (2) within one year of such update and biennially thereafter through 2022, report on policy implementation and facility compliance. The VA shall: (1) develop and revise such policy in consultation with veteran service organizations, the National Highway Transportation Administration, industry representatives, manufacturers of automobile adaptive equipment, and other entities with relevant expertise; and (2) ensure
against the use of a certifying entity that has a financial conflict of interest regarding the certification of an eligible provider.

H.R. 3471 would state that the VA may appoint licensed hearing aid specialists to the Veterans Health Administration. The VA shall ensure that: (1) a hearing aid specialist may only perform hearing services consistent with the specialist’s state license related to the practice of fitting and dispensing hearing aids, without excluding other qualified professionals from rendering services in overlapping practice areas; (2) services provided to veterans by hearing aid specialists shall be provided as part of the non-medical treatment plan developed by an audiologist; and (3) VA medical facilities provide veterans with access to the full range of audiologist services. The VA shall, within one year and annually thereafter for the next five years, report on: (1) veterans access to such hearing health services; and (2) VA contracting policies for providing hearing health services to veterans in non-VA facilities, including the number of veterans referred to audiologists and hearing aid specialists.

Legislative History

H.R. 3471 was introduced by Representative Jackie Walorski on September 10, 2015 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had 51 cosponsors, 5 of which were original cosponsors.

On November 17, 2015 the Subcommittee on Health held a legislative hearing on H.R. 3471 and received testimony from the following witnesses: the Honorable Beto O’Rourke, U.S. House of Representatives, 16th Congressional District of Texas; the Honorable Andy Barr, U.S. House of Representatives, 6th Congressional District of Kentucky; the Honorable Matt Cartwright, U.S. House of Representatives, 17th Congressional District of Pennsylvania; the Honorable Scott Peters, U.S. House of Representatives, 52nd Congressional District of California; the Honorable Martha Roby, U.S. House of Representatives, 2nd Congressional District of Alabama; the Honorable Jackie Walorski, U.S. House of Representatives, 2nd Congressional District of Indiana; the Honorable John Kline, U.S. House of Representatives, 2nd Congressional District of Minnesota; the Honorable Gus Bilirakis, U.S. House of Representatives, 12th Congressional District of Florida; Adrian Atizado, Deputy National Legislative, Director Disabled American Veterans; LaRanda D. Holt, Assistant Director for Women and Minority Veterans Outreach, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; and Carlos Fuentes, Senior Legislative Associate, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Janet Murphy, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Elias Hernandez, Chief Officer, Workforce Management and Consulting Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Harold Kudler, Chief Consultant for Mental Health Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Susan Blauert, Deputy Assistant General Counsel, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.
On April 29, 2016, the Subcommittee on Health met in an open session and an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3471 was offered by Rep. Dan Benishek of Michigan. The amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to by the Health Subcommittee by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 3471, as amended, to the Full Committee was offered by Ranking Member Julia Brownley of California and was adopted by the Health Subcommittee by voice vote.

On May 18, 2016, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs met in an open session and an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3471 was offered by Rep. Walorski of Indiana. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3471 was offered by Rep. Benishek of Michigan. The amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3471 offered by Rep. Benishek was agreed to by the Full Committee via a voice vote. The amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended to H.R. 3471, as amended was agreed to by the Full Committee via a voice vote; H.R. 3471, as amended passed the Full Committee via voice vote. A motion to favorably report H.R. 3471, as amended to the House of Representatives was offered by Ranking Member Brown and agreed to via voice vote. The Committee Report was filed on September 6, 2016 (H. Rept. 114–709).

On September 12, 2016 the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 3471, as amended by voice vote.

On November 17, 2016 H.R. 3471 was discharged from the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs by Unanimous Consent. H.R. 3471 passed the Senate with an amendment by Unanimous Consent.

On November 29, 2016 motion to reconsider laid on the table agreed to without objection.

BLACK HILLS NATIONAL CEMETERY BOUNDARY EXPANSION ACT

(H.R. 3839)

Summary

H.R. 3829, Black Hill National Cemetery Boundary Expansion Act, would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to: (1) complete environmental, cultural resource, and other due diligence activities on certain public land to confirm its suitability for inclusion in the Black Hills National Cemetery, South Dakota; and (2) notify the Department of the Interior of such activities. After completion of such activities and upon receipt by Interior of written confirmation of suitability from the VA, the land shall: (1) be withdrawn from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including the mining laws, the mineral leasing laws, and the geothermal leasing laws, for as long as it remains under VA administrative jurisdiction; (2) be deemed property; and (3) be transferred to the VA for use as national cemeteries.

H.R. 3839 would establish that the Interior shall publish a notice containing the legal descriptions of such transferred land. The VA shall reimburse Interior for reasonable transfer costs, including survey costs.

H.R. 3839 would establish that upon a determination by the VA that all or a portion of such transferred land shall not be used for
cemetery purposes, the VA shall: (1) notify Interior and transfer jurisdic-
tion of the land back to Interior, and (2) be responsible for any decon-
tamination costs necessary for restoration of the lands to the public lands.

Legislative History

H.R. 3839 was introduced by Representative Kristi Noem on Oc-
tober 27, 2015 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, in addition to the House Committee on Natural Resources. The bill had no cosponsors.

On September 6, 2016 H.R. 3839 was reported amended by the Committee on Natural Resources (H. Rept. 114–714) and dis-
charged from the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The House agreed on a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 3839, as amended by voice vote.

On September 12, 2016 H.R. 3839 was read twice by the Senate and placed on the Senate Legislative Calendar under General Or-
ders. Calendar No. 624.

VET ACT
(H.R. 3936)

Summary

H.R. 3936, VET Act, would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), beginning not later than October 1, 2016, to carry out a three-year pilot program under which the VA shall carry out Veteran Engagement Team events to assist veterans in completing VA disability and pension claims. Such events shall be carried out: during the first year, at least once a month within the jurisdiction of each of 10 VA regional offices, including at least 2 regional offices in each of the 5 districts of the Veterans Benefits Administra-
tion; during each of the second and third years, at least once a month within the jurisdiction of each of 15 VA regional offices, in-
cluding at least 3 regional offices in each district; at different loca-
tions within each regional office’s jurisdiction and at least 50 miles from any regional office; during the sponsoring regional office’s nor-
mal business hours; and with a sufficient number of physicians (to be available for opinions only), veteran service and rating rep-
resentatives, and other appropriate claims personnel to initiate, up-
date, and finalize the completion and adjudication of claims.

Amounts shall be paid to a VA employee for event work only from amounts otherwise available for the employee’s salary. No ad-
ditional appropriations are authorized for such payments. The VA shall: (1) collect and analyze event-satisfaction information from at-
tending veterans, and (2) report annually to Congress on event im-
plementation. The VA may not permanently transfer any Veterans Health Administration physician to staff an event.

H.R. 3936 would ensure The Veterans Access, Choice, and Ac-
countability Act of 2014 is amended to reduce the aggregate amount of awards and bonuses that may be paid by the VA in FY2017.
Summary

H.R. 3956, VA Health Center Management Stability and Improvement Act, would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to: (1) develop and implement a plan to hire highly qualified directors for each VA medical center that lacks a permanent director, and (2) prioritize such hiring for the medical centers that have been without a permanent director for the longest periods. The plan shall include: (1) a hiring deadline; (2) identification of possible hiring impediments; and (3) identification of opportunities to
promote and train candidates from within the VA for senior executive positions, including medical center directors.

H.R. 3956 would state that the VA shall ensure that the director of each VA medical facility annually certifies that the facility is in full compliance with all provisions of law and regulations relating to scheduling appointments for veterans hospital care and medical services. The VA may not waive any applicable provision of such laws or regulations. If unable to make such certification, the director shall provide the VA with an explanation of noncompliance and a description of compliance actions being taken. If a director does not make a certification for any year, each covered official may not receive specified awards or bonuses during the subsequent year. A covered official is the: (1) director, (2) chief of staff, (3) associate director, (4) associate director for patient care, and (5) deputy chief of staff.

H.R. 3956 would state that the VA shall ensure that its directives and policies apply uniformly to each VA office or facility.

**Legislative History**

H.R. 3956 was introduced by Representative Mike Bost on November 5, 2015 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had 12 cosponsors, 3 of which were original cosponsors.

On April 20, 2016 the Subcommittee on Health held a legislative hearing on H.R. 3956 and received testimony from the following witnesses: the Honorable Lee M. Zeldin, U.S. House of Representatives, 1st Congressional District of New York; the Honorable Mike Bost, U.S. House of Representatives, 12th Congressional District of Illinois; the Honorable Ann M. Kuster, U.S. House of Representatives, 2nd Congressional District of New Hampshire; the Honorable Elise M. Stefanik, U.S. House of Representatives, 21st Congressional District of New York; and, the Honorable Jackie Walorski, U.S. House of Representatives, 2nd Congressional District of Indiana; Diane M. Zumatto, National Legislative Director, AMVETS; Shurhonda Y. Love, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Fred S. Sganga, Legislative Officer, National Association of State Veterans Homes; Maureen McCarthy, M.D., Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Patient Care Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Susan Blauert, Chief Counsel, Health Care Law Group, Office of General Counsel, on behalf of U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On April 29, 2016 the Subcommittee on Health met in an open session and ordered H.R. 3956 to be favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On May 18, 2016, the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs met in an open session and an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3956 was offered by Rep. Bost of Illinois. The amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3956 was agreed to by the Full Committee via voice vote. H.R. 3956, as amended passed the Full Committee via voice vote. A motion to favorably report H.R. 3956, as amended to the House of Representatives was offered by Ranking Member Brown and agreed to via voice vote.
On May 23, 2016 the House agreed on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 3956, as amended by voice vote. On May 24, 2016 H.R. 3956 was received in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

TO DESIGNATE THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMUNITY-BASED OUTPATIENT CLINIC IN LAUGHLIN, NEVADA, AS THE "MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER JESSE DEAN VA CLINIC"

(H.R. 3969)

Summary

H.R. 3969 would designate the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Laughlin, Nevada, as the “Master Chief Petty Officer Jesse Dean VA Clinic.”

Legislative History

H.R. 3969 was introduced by Representative Joseph Heck on November 5, 2015 and referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had 2 original cosponsors.

On May 23, 2016 the House agreed on a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 3969, as amended by voice vote.

On September 8, 2016 the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs discharged H.R. 3969 by Unanimous Consent. H.R. 3969 passed the Senate without amendment by Unanimous Consent.

On September 14, 2016 H.R. 3969 was presented to the President.

On September 23, 2016 H.R. 3969 was signed by the President and became Public Law No: 114–220.

SUPPORT OUR MILITARY CAREGIVERS ACT

(H.R. 3989)

Summary

H.R. 3989, Support Our Military Caregivers Act, would permit an individual to elect to have an independent contractor perform an external clinical review of any of the following: a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) denial of an individual’s application to be a caregiver or family caregiver eligible for VA benefits; with respect to an approved application, a VA determination of the level or amount of personal care services that a veteran requires; a request by a caregiver or family caregiver for a reconsideration of the level or amount of personal care services that a veteran requires based on post-application changes; and a revocation of benefits by the VA. The VA shall ensure that each external clinical review is completed and the individual is notified in writing of the results within 120 days of the election.

Legislative History

H.R. 3989 was introduced by Representative Elise Stefanik on November 5, 2015 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had 19 cosponsors.

On April 20, 2016 the Subcommittee on Health held a legislative hearing on H.R. 3989 and received testimony from the following
witnesses: the Honorable Lee M. Zeldin, U.S. House of Representatives, 1st Congressional District of New York; the Honorable Mike Bost, U.S. House of Representatives, 12th Congressional District of Illinois; the Honorable Ann M. Kuster, U.S. House of Representatives, 2nd Congressional District of New Hampshire; the Honorable Elise M. Stefanik, U.S. House of Representatives, 21st Congressional District of New York; and, the Honorable Jackie Walorski, U.S. House of Representatives, 2nd Congressional District of Indiana; Diane M. Zumatto, National Legislative Director, AMVETS; Shurhonda Y. Love, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Fred S. Sganga, Legislative Officer, National Association of State Veterans Homes; Maureen McCarthy M.D., Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Patient Care Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Susan Blauert, Chief Counsel, Health Care Law Group, Office of General Counsel, on behalf of U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On April 29, 2016, the Subcommittee on Health met in an open session and an amendment to H.R. 3989 was offered by Rep. Gus Bilirakis of Florida. The amendment was agreed to by the Health Subcommittee by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 3989, as amended, to the Full Committee was offered by Ranking Member Julia Brownley of California and was adopted by the Health Subcommittee by voice vote.

On May 18, 2016 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs met in an open session and ordered H.R. 3989, as amended to be favorably forwarded to the House by voice vote.

On May 23, 2016 the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 3989, as amended by voice vote.

On May 24, 2016 H.R. 3989 was received by the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

TO DIRECT THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO CONVEY TO THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ALL RIGHT, TITLE, AND INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES TO THE PROPERTY KNOWN AS “THE COMMUNITY LIVING CENTER” AT THE LAKE BALDWIN VETERANS AFFAIRS OUTPATIENT CLINIC, ORLANDO, FLORIDA

(H.R. 4056)

Summary

H.R. 4056 would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs to convey to the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs all right, title, and interest of the United States in the property known as “The Community Living Center” at the Lake Baldwin Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic, Orlando, Florida. The deed of conveyance shall require all of the property to be used for the sole purpose of providing nursing home, domiciliary, or adult day health care to veterans.

Legislative History

H.R. 4056 was introduced by Representative John Mica on November 18, 2015 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had no cosponsors.
On December 8, 2015 the Subcommittee on Health held a legislative hearing on H.R. 4056 and received testimony from the following witnesses: the Honorable John Shimkus, U.S. House of Representatives, 15th Congressional District of Illinois; the Honorable Ted Lieu, U.S. House of Representatives, 33rd Congressional District, California; the Honorable John L. Mica, U.S. House of Representatives, 7th Congressional District of Florida; the Honorable Jerry McNerney, U.S. House of Representatives, 9th Congressional District of California; and, the Honorable Mike Coffman, U.S. House of Representatives, 6th Congressional District of Colorado; Raymond C. Kelley, Director of the National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Howard Trace, Director of the National Library and Museum Division, The American Legion; Accompanied by: Louis Celli Jr., Director of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Stella S. Fiotes, Director of the Office of Construction and Facilities Management, Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Vince Kane, Special Assistant to the Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On February 9, 2016 the House agreed on a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended by voice vote.

On February 22, 2016 the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs discharged H.R. 4056 by Unanimous Consent. H.R. 4056 passed the Senate without amendment by Unanimous Consent.

On February 25, 2016 H.R. 4056 was presented to the President.

On February 29, 2016 H.R. 4056 was signed by the President and became Public Law No: 114–130.

JASON SIMCAKOSKI PROMISE ACT

(H.R. 4063)

Summary

H.R. 4063, Jason Simcakoski Promise Act, would direct the Department Veterans Affairs (VA) to expand its Opioid Safety Initiative to include all VA medical facilities. The VA shall establish guidance that each VA health care provider, before initiating opioid therapy, use the VA Opioid Therapy Risk Report tool, which shall include: (1) information from state prescription drug monitoring programs; and (2) a patient’s most recent information in order to assess the risk for adverse outcomes of opioid therapy, including the concurrent use of controlled substances such as benzodiazepines. The VA shall establish enhanced standards for the use of routine and random urine drug tests before and during opioid therapy to help prevent substance abuse, dependence, and diversion, including that: (1) tests occur at least once each year; and (2) health care providers use the test results to tailor pain therapy, safeguards, and risk management strategies for each patient. The VA shall use the Interdisciplinary Chronic Pain Management Training Team Program to provide education and training on pain management and safe opioid prescribing practices for managing patients with chronic pain. In carrying out the VA Opioid Safety Initiative, each VA medical facility shall designate a pain management team of health care professionals to coordinate pain
management therapy for patients experiencing acute and chronic pain that is non-cancer related. The VA shall establish standard protocols for the designation of pain management teams at each VA medical facility. Each protocol shall ensure that any health care provider without expertise in prescribing analgesics, or who has not completed the required education and training, does not prescribe opioids unless such health care provider: consults with a provider who has pain management expertise or who is on the pain management team; and refers the patient to the pain management team for subsequent prescriptions and therapy.

In carrying out the Opioid Safety Initiative and the Opioid Therapy Risk Report tool, the VA shall: ensure access by VA health care providers to information on controlled substances, including opioids and benzodiazepines, prescribed to veterans who receive care outside the VA through a state prescription drug monitoring program; include such information in the Opioid Therapy Risk Report; and require VA health care providers to provide to a state's prescription drug monitoring program information on prescriptions of controlled substances received by veterans in that state. The VA shall report to Congress with respect to improving the VA Opioid Therapy Risk Report tool to allow for improved real-time tracking and access to data on: (1) key clinical indicators regarding the totality of veterans' opioid use, (2) concurrent prescribing by VA health care providers of opioids in different health care settings, and (3) mail-order prescriptions of opioids prescribed to veterans under VA-administered laws. The VA shall: maximize the availability to veterans of Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved opioid receptor antagonists, including naloxone; equip each VA pharmacy with such antagonists for outpatient use; and expand the Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution program to ensure that all veterans in receipt of VA health care who are at risk of opioid overdose may access such antagonists and training on the proper administration of such antagonists. The VA shall include in the Opioid Therapy Risk Report tool: information on the most recent time the tool was accessed by a VA health care provider with respect to a veteran and the results of such veteran's most recent urine drug test; and the ability of VA health care providers to determine whether a health care provider prescribed opioids to a veteran without checking tool information.

The VA shall modify its computerized patient record system to ensure that any health care provider that accesses a veteran's record will be immediately notified about whether the veteran: (1) is receiving opioid therapy and has a history of substance use disorder or prior instances of overdose, (2) has a history of opioid abuse, or (3) is at risk of becoming an opioid abuser. H.R. 4063 would state that the VA and the Department of Defense (DOD) shall ensure that the VA/DOD Pain Management Working Group includes a focus on: opioid prescribing practices; management of acute and chronic pain, including related training for health care providers; complementary and integrative health and complementary alternative medicines; concurrent use of opioids and prescription drugs to treat mental health disorders, including benzodiazepines; prescribing opioids to treat mental health disorders; coordination in coverage of and consistent access to medica-
tions prescribed for patients transitioning from DOD to VA health care; and identification and treatment of substance use disorders.

The VA and DOD shall ensure that such working group: (1) coordinates with other relevant working groups, (2) consults with other relevant federal agencies, and (3) consults with VA and DOD regarding any proposed updates to the VA/DOD Clinical Practice Guideline for Management of Opioid Therapy for Chronic Pain. The VA and DOD shall update the VA/DOD Clinical Practice Guideline for Management of Opioid Therapy for Chronic Pain. Matters to be included in such update are prescribed.

H.R. 4063 would ensure that the Government Accountability Office shall, within two years, report to Congress on: (1) the VA Opioid Safety Initiative, and (2) opioid prescribing practices of VA health care providers. Such report shall include: improvements to the Opioid Safety Initiative; information regarding VA-prescribed opioid-related deaths, overall opioid prescription rates for non-cancer, non-palliative, and non-hospice care patients, concomitant opioid and benzodiazepine prescription rates, the prescription of opioids to patients without any pain (including non-opioid mental health disorders); the effectiveness of opioid therapy; and evaluations of the VA's oversight processes regarding veterans' opioid use and of its implementation of the VA/DOD Guideline for Management of Opioid Therapy. The VA shall: (1) report to Congress for five years regarding the prescription of opioids at each VA facility to treat non-cancer, non-palliative, and non-hospice care patients; and (2) notify Congress and conduct an investigation through the Office of the Medical Inspector if the VA determines that a prescription rate is inconsistent with safe care standards.

H.R. 4063 would establish a VA disclosure of certain information to a state controlled substance monitoring program in order to prevent misuse of prescription medicines by a veteran or dependent is made mandatory.

H.R. 4063 would state that the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 is amended to reduce the aggregate amount of awards and bonuses that may be paid by the VA in each of FY2017–FY2021 to $230 million.

Legislative History

H.R. 4063 was introduced by Representative Gus Bilirakis on November 18, 2015 and referred to the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee in addition to the House Armed Service Committee. The bill had 35 cosponsors, 15 of which were original cosponsors.

On February 25, 2016 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs met in an open session and an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 4063 was offered by Rep. Bilirakis of Florida. An amendment to the A.N.S. to H.R. 4063 was offered by Rep. Walorski of Indiana, and a second amendment to the A.N.S. to H.R. 4063 was offered by Rep. Walorski of Indiana. The second amendment to the A.N.S. to H.R. 4063 offered by Rep. Walorski was agreed to by the Full Committee via voice vote, the first amendment to the A.N.S. to H.R. 4063 offered by Rep. Walorski was agreed to by the Full Committee via voice vote. The A.N.S., as amended offered by Rep. Bilirakis was agreed to by the Full Committee via voice vote and H.R. 4063, as amended passed the Full Committee via voice vote.
A motion to favorably report H.R. 4063, as amended to the House of Representatives was offered by Ranking Member Brown and agreed to via voice vote. The Committee Report was filed on May 10, 2016 (H. Rept. 114–546) and the Armed Services Committee discharged H.R. 4063.

On May 10, 2016 the House agreed on a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 4063, as amended by voice vote.

On May 11, 2016 H.R. 4063 was received in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans Affairs.

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EMERGENCY MEDICAL STAFFING RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION ACT**

**(H.R. 4150)**

**Summary**

H.R. 4150, Department of Veterans’ Affairs Emergency Medical Staffing Recruitment and Retention Act, would authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to modify the hours of employment for a full-time VA physician or physician assistant to be more than or less than 80 hours in a biweekly pay period if the total of such employee’s hours of employment in a calendar year does not exceed 2,080 hours.

**Legislative History**

H.R. 4150 was introduced by Representative Raul Ruiz on December 1, 2015 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had 2 cosponsors, 1 of which was an original cosponsor.

On June 23, 2016 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs held a legislative hearing on H.R. 4150 and received testimony from the following witnesses: Honorable Doug Lamborn, U.S. House of Representatives, 1st Congressional District of Nevada; The Honorable Raul Ruiz, U.S. House of Representatives, 36th Congressional District of California; The Honorable Beto O’Rourke, U.S. House of Representatives, 16th Congressional District of Texas; The Honorable Ron DeSantis, U.S. House of Representatives, 6th Congressional District of Florida; The Honorable Ted Yoho, U.S. House of Representatives, 3rd Congressional District of Florida; The Honorable Jody Hice, U.S. House of Representatives, 10th Congressional District of Georgia; The Honorable Dan Newhouse, U.S. House of Representatives, 4th Congressional District of Washington; and The Honorable David Young, U.S. House of Representatives, 3rd Congressional District of Iowa; The Honorable Sloan Gibson, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Deputy Secretary Gibson was accompanied by, Ms. Laura Eskenazi, Executive in Charge and Vice Chairman, Board of Veterans Appeals; Mr. David McLenachen, Deputy Under Secretary for Disability Assistance, Veterans Benefits Administration; and Dr. Maureen McCarthy, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health Patient Care Services, Veterans Health Administration within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Testimony was also provided by Mr. Raymond Kelley, Director, National Legislative Service of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Mr. Paul Varela, Assistant National Legislative Director with Disabled American Veterans;
Mr. Carl Blake, Associate Executive Director of Government Relations with the Paralyzed Veterans of America; Mr. Louis J. Celli, Jr., Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division of The American Legion; and Mr. Rick Weidman, Executive Director for Policy and Government Affairs with the Vietnam Veterans of America; Statements for the Record were provided by the following Veterans Service Organizations: American Battle Monuments Commission, AMVETS, Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Military Officers Association of America, Military Veterans Advocacy, Inc., National Organization of Veterans Advocates, National Veterans Legal Services Program, P.A.W.S. Foundation, Stetson University College of Law’s Veterans Law Institute, U.S. Department of Labor.

On September 21, 2016 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs met in an open session and an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 4150 was offered by Rep. Raul Ruiz of California. The A.N.S. to H.R. 4150 was agreed to by the Full Committee and passed the Full Committee via voice vote. A motion to favorably report H.R. 4150, as amended, to the House of Representatives was offered by Rep. Takano of California and agreed to via voice vote. The Committee Report was filed on November 14, 2016 (H. Rept. 114–811).

On December 6, 2016 the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 4150, as amended by voice vote.

On December 7, 2016 H.R. 4150, as amended was received in the Senate.

WOMEN AIRFORCE SERVICE PILOT ARLINGTON INURNMENT RESTORATION ACT

(H.R. 4336)

Summary

H.R. 4336 would direct the Department of the Army to ensure that the cremated remains of persons whose service has been determined to be active duty service pursuant to the GI Bill Improvement Act of 1977 are eligible for above ground inurnment in Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors. Such provision shall apply with respect to: (1) the remains of a person that are not formally interred or inurned as of the date of the enactment of this Act, and (2) a person who dies on or after such date.

H.R. 4336 would direct The Department of the Army shall report to Congress on Arlington National Cemetery’s interment and inurnment capacity, including: the estimated date that the cemetery will reach maximum interment and inurnment capacity; and recommendations for legislative actions and non legislative options to ensure that the cemetery’s maximum interment and inurnment capacity is not reached until well into the future, including options with respect to redefining interment and inurnment eligibility and expansion opportunities beyond the cemetery’s current boundaries.

Legislative History

H.R. 4336 was introduced by Representative Martha McSally on January 6, 2016 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’
Affairs in addition to the House Armed Services Committee. The bill had 191 cosponsors, 24 of which were original cosponsors.

On February 25, 2016 the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs met in an open session and an amendment in the nature of a substitute was offered by Rep. Abraham of Louisiana to H.R. 4336. An amendment to the A.N.S. was offered by RM Brown of Florida. The amendment to the A.N.S. to H.R. 4336 offered by Rep. Brown was agreed to by the Full Committee via voice vote. The A.N.S. to H.R. 4336, as amended offered by Rep. Abraham was agreed to by the Full Committee via voice vote. H.R. 4336, as amended, passed the Full Committee via voice vote. A motion to favorably report H.R. 4336, as amended, to the House of Representatives was offered by Ranking Member Brown and agreed to via voice vote. The Committee Report was filed on March 21, 2016 (H. Rept. 114–459) and the bill was discharged from the Armed Services Committee.

On March 22, 2016 the House agreed to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 4336, as amended by 385 Yeas and 0 Nays.

On May 11, 2016 the House agreed on a motion to agree to the Senate amendments without objection.

On May 13, 2016 H.R. 4336 was presented to the President.

On May 20, 2016 H.R. 4336 was signed by the President and became Public Law No: 114–158.

FASTER CARE FOR VETERANS ACT OF 2016

(H.R. 4352)

Summary

H.R. 4352, Faster Care for Veterans Act of 2016, would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to begin an 18-month pilot program in at least three Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) under which veterans use an Internet website to schedule and confirm appointments at VA medical facilities. The pilot program’s duration may be extended and the number of VISNs may be increased.

Legislative History

H.R. 4352 was introduced by Representative Seth Moulton on January 8, 2016 and was referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The bill had 228 cosponsors, one of which was an original cosponsor.

On December 6, 2016 the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 4352 by voice vote.

On December 7, 2016 H.R. 4352 was received in the Senate.
TO EXTEND THE DEADLINE FOR THE SUBMITTAL OF THE FINAL REPORT
REQUIRED BY THE COMMISSION ON CARE

(H.R. 4437)

Summary

H.R. 4437 would amend the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to extend the deadline for the Commission on Care’s final report to June 30, 2016. (The Commission is charged with examining veterans’ access to Department of Veterans Affairs health care and to examine how best to organize the Veterans Health Administration, locate health resources, and deliver health care to veterans during the next 20 years.)

Legislative History

H.R. 4437 was introduced by Chairman Jeff Miller on February 2, 2016 and was referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had one cosponsor.

On February 9, 2016 the House agreed on a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill by voice vote.

On February 22, 2016 the H.R. 4437 was discharged from the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee by Unanimous Consent and passed the Senate without amendment by Unanimous Consent.

On February 25, 2016 H.R. 4437 was presented to the President.

On February 29, 2016 H.R. 4437 was signed by the President and became Public Law No: 114–131.

FISCAL YEAR 2016 DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS SEISMIC
SAFETY AND CONSTRUCTION AUTHORIZATION ACT

(H.R. 4590)

Summary

H.R. 4590, Fiscal Year 2016 Department of Veterans’ Affairs Seismic Safety and Construction Authorization Act, would authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to carry out the following major medical facility projects (each with specified maximum authorized funds): seismic corrections to buildings, including retrofitting and replacement of high-risk buildings, in San Francisco, California; seismic corrections to facilities, including facilities to support homeless veterans, at the medical center in West Los Angeles, California; seismic corrections to the mental health and community living center in Long Beach, California; construction of an outpatient clinic, administrative space, cemetery, and columbarium in Alameda, California; realignment of medical facilities in Livermore, California; construction of a replacement community living center in Perry Point, Maryland; and seismic corrections and other renovations to several buildings and construction of a specialty care building in American Lake, Washington. The bill authorizes appropriations for such projects for FY2016 or the year in which funds are appropriated for the Construction, Major Projects, account. Only specified funds may be used to carry out such projects. H.R. 4590 would state that the VA shall submit the following information for each project: a line item accounting of construction management expenditures, future amounts budgeted for
construction management, a justification for expenditures and future amounts, and any agreement entered into by the VA regarding the Army Corps of Engineers providing project services.

Legislative History

H.R. 4590 was introduced by Chairman Jeff Miller on February 23, 2016 and was referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had no cosponsors.

On February 25, 2016 the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs met in an open session and an amendment to H.R. 4590 was offered by Rep. Coffman of Colorado to H.R. 4590. An amendment to H.R. 4590 was also offered by Rep. Rice of New York. The amendment to H.R. 4590 offered by Rep. Rice was agreed to by the Full Committee via voice vote. The amendment to H.R. 4590 offered by Rep. Coffman was also agreed to by the Full Committee via voice vote. H.R. 4590, as amended, passed the Full Committee via voice vote and a motion to favorably report H.R. 4590, as amended, to the House of Representatives was offered by Ranking Member Brown and agreed to via voice vote. The Committee Report was filed on May 10, 2016 (H. Rept. 114–545).

On June 21, 2016 the House agreed on a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 4590, as amended by voice vote.

On June 22, 2016 H.R. 4590 was received in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

TO EXPAND THE ELIGIBILITY FOR HEADSTONES, MARKERS, AND MEDALLIONS FURNISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FOR DECEASED INDIVIDUALS WHO WERE AWARDED THE MEDAL OF HONOR AND ARE BURIED IN PRIVATE CEMETERIES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

(H.R. 4757)

Summary

H.R. 4757, To expand the eligibility for headstones, markers, and medallions furnished by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for deceased individuals who were awarded the Medal of Honor and are buried in private cemeteries, and for other purposes, would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to furnish at a private cemetery, and upon request, a headstone, marker, or medallion that signifies the status of an eligible veteran who served in the Armed Forces on or after April 6, 1917, as a Medal of Honor recipient. If the VA furnished a headstone, marker, or medallion for a deceased veteran that does not signify his or her status as a Medal of Honor recipient, the VA shall upon request replace that headstone, marker, or medallion with one that signifies the deceased’s status as a Medal of Honor recipient.

H.R. 4757 was introduced by Chairman Jeff Miller on March 16, 2016 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had no cosponsors.

On April 13, 2016 the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a legislative hearing on H.R. 4757 and received testimony from the following witnesses: Honorable Jeff Miller, U.S. House of Representatives, 1st Congressional District, Flor-
ida; the Honorable Corrine Brown, 5th Congressional District, Florida; the Honorable Ryan Costello, U.S. House of Representatives, 6th Congressional District, Pennsylvania; and the Honorable Mia Love, U.S. House of Representatives, 4th Congressional District, Utah; Mr. David R. McLenachen, Deputy Under Secretary for Disability Assistance with the Veterans Benefits Administration at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. McLenachen was accompanied by Mr. Matt Sullivan, Deputy Under Secretary of Finance and Planned and CFO with the National Cemetery Administration with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Mr. Patrick K. Hallinan, Executive Director with the Army National Military Cemeteries at the Department of the Army; Mr. Carl Blake, Associate Executive Director for Government Relations for the Paralyzed Veterans of America; Mr. Aleks Morosky, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Mr. Paul R. Varela, Assistant National Legislative Director for the Disabled American Veterans; Ms. Elizabeth Davis, Advocate for Survivors' Benefits; and Mr. Edward G. Lilley, Team Leader for the Health Policy, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division for the American Legion; A statement for the record was proved by Mr. John Rowan, National President of Vietnam Veterans of America.

On May 11, 2016 the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs met in an open session and an A.N.S. to H.R.4757 was offered by Rep. Titus of Nevada and was agreed to by the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 4757, as amended to the Full Committee was offered by Ranking Member Titus and was adopted by the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote.

On September 21, 2016 the Committee on Veterans' Affairs met in an open session and an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 4757, as amended was offered by Rep. Jeff Miller of Florida. The A.N.S. to H.R. 4757, as amended was agreed to by the Full Committee via voice vote. H.R. 4757, as amended, passed the Full Committee via voice vote. A motion to favorably report H.R. 4757, as amended, to the House of Representatives was offered by Acting Ranking Member Takano of California and agreed to via voice vote. The Committee Report was filed on November 14, 2016 (H. Rept. 114–812).

On November 29, 2016 the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 4757, as amended by 401 Yeas and 0 Nays.

On November 30, 2016 H.R. 4757 was received in the Senate.

PROTECTING VETERANS EDUCATIONAL CHOICE ACT OF 2016

(H.R. 5047)

Summary

H.R. 5047, Protecting Veterans' Educational Choice Act of 2016, would require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) counselors who provide specified educational or vocational counseling services to provide a requesting veteran or member of the Armed Forces with information about the articulation agreements (agreements governing the transferability of credits toward meeting specific degree or program requirements) of each institution of higher learn-
The VA shall: (1) provide a veteran who is certified as eligible for VA educational assistance with information on education counseling services and articulation agreements, and (2) implement this bill within 90 days after its enactment.

Legislative History

H.R. 5047 was introduced by Representative Jody Hice on March 25, 2016 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had 24 cosponsors, 3 of which were original cosponsors.

On September 21, 2016 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs met in an open session and a motion to favorably report H.R. 5047 to the House of Representatives was offered by Acting Ranking Member Takano of California and agreed to via voice vote. The Committee Report was filed on November 14, 2016 (H. Rept. 114–813).

On November 30, 2016 the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 5047 by 411 Yeas and 3 Nays.

On December 1, 2016 H.R. 5047 was received in the Senate.

CHIP IN FOR VETS ACT OF 2016

(H.R. 5099)

Summary

H.R. 5099, CHIP IN for Vets Act of 2016, would authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to carry out a program under which it may enter into up to five partnership arrangements with a non-federal entity to conduct one or more: super construction projects (those for the construction, alteration, or acquisition of a medical facility involving a total expenditure of more than $100 million); major construction projects (those for the construction, alteration, or acquisition of a medical facility involving a total expenditure of more than $10 million, but not including an acquisition by exchange); or major construction projects to construct a new cemetery or to develop additional gravesites or columbarium niches at an existing cemetery. The selected projects may be ones for which: Congress has appropriated partial funding or the VA has identified a need for the project by listing it on the Major Construction Strategic Capital Investment Planning priority list, and a non-federal entity has entered or is willing to enter into a formal agreement with the VA to independently finance and/or donate acceptable project funds at no additional government cost. One of the non-federal entity partnership agreements shall be a project to design, finance, and construct a new ambulatory care center in Omaha, Nebraska.

Legislative History

H.R. 5099 was introduced by Representative Brad Ashford on April 28, 2016 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had 4 cosponsors.

On September 21, 2016, the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs met in an open session and an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5099 was offered by Rep. Tim Walz of Minnesota. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute was offered by Rep. Julia Brownley of California. The amendment to the
amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by Rep. Brownley was officially withdrawn from the markup agenda by Rep. Brownley of California. The amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5099 was agreed to by the Full Committee via voice vote. H.R. 5099, as amended, passed the Full Committee via voice vote. A motion to favorably report H.R. 5099, as amended, to the House of Representatives was offered by Acting Ranking Member Takano of California and agreed to via voice vote. The Committee Report was filed on November 14, 2016 (H. Rept. 114–814). On December 7, 2016 the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 5099, as amended by voice vote.

On December 8, 2016 H.R. 5099, as amended was received in the Senate.

VET CONNECT ACT OF 2016
(H.R. 5162)

Summary

H.R. 5162, VET Connect Act of 2016, would authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to disclose to non-VA entities that provide hospital care or medical treatment to veterans (including private entities and other federal agencies) records of the identity, diagnosis, prognosis, or treatment of any patient in connection with a program relating to drug abuse, alcoholism or alcohol abuse, infection with the human immunodeficiency virus, or sickle cell anemia.

Legislative History

H.R. 5162 was introduced by Representative Beto O’Rourke on April 29, 2016 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had one cosponsor.

On June 23, 2016 the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs held a legislative hearing on H.R. 5162 and received testimony from the following witnesses: the Honorable Doug Lamborn, U.S. House of Representatives, 1st Congressional District of Nevada; The Honorable Raul Ruiz U.S. House of Representatives, 36th Congressional District of California; The Honorable Beto O’Rourke, U.S. House of Representatives, 16th Congressional District of Texas; The Honorable Ron DeSantis, U.S. House of Representatives, 6th Congressional District of Florida; The Honorable Ted Yoho, U.S. House of Representatives, 3rd Congressional District of Florida; The Honorable Jody Hice, U.S. House of Representatives, 10th Congressional District of Georgia; The Honorable Dan Newhouse, U.S. House of Representatives, 4th Congressional District of Washington; and The Honorable David Young, U.S. House of Representatives, 3rd Congressional District of Iowa; The Honorable Sloan Gibson, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Deputy Secretary Gibson was accompanied by, Ms. Laura Eskenazi, Executive in Charge and Vice Chairman, Board of Veterans Appeals; Mr. David McLenachen, Deputy Under Secretary for Disability Assistance, Veterans Benefits Administration; and Dr. Maureen McCarthy, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health Patient Care Services, Veterans Health Administration within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Testimony was also provided by Mr. Ray-
mond Kelley, Director, National Legislative Service of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Mr. Paul Varela, Assistant National Legislative Director with Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Carl Blake, Associate Executive Director of Government Relations with the Paralyzed Veterans of America; Mr. Louis J. Celli, Jr., Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division of The American Legion; and Mr. Rick Weidman, Executive Director for Policy and Government Affairs with the Vietnam Veterans of America; Statements for the Record were provided by the following Veterans Service Organizations: American Battle Monuments Commission, AMVETS, Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Military Officers Association of America, Military Veterans Advocacy, Inc., National Organization of Veterans Advocates, National Veterans Legal Services Program, P.A.W.S. Foundation, Stetson University College of Law's Veterans Law Institute, U.S. Department of Labor.

On September 21, 2016, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs met in an open session and a motion to favorably report H.R. 5162 to the House of Representatives was offered by Acting Ranking Member Takano of California and agreed to via voice vote.

On September 26, 2016 the House agreed on a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 5162 by voice vote.

On September 27, 2016 H.R. 5162 was received in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

WINGMAN ACT

(H.R. 5166)

Summary

H.R. 5166, WINGMAN Act, would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide an accredited, permanent congressional employee with read-only remote access to the electronic Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) claims records system of a represented veteran, regardless of whether the employee is acting under a power of attorney executed by the veteran. The VA shall ensure that access does not allow the employee to modify system data. An employee must complete the VA certification process required of agents or attorneys in order to have system access. Each Member of Congress who elects to have an employee participate in the system shall bear the certification cost, which shall be paid from the Member's representational allowance. Information access by an employee shall be deemed: (1) a covered disclosure requiring prior consent, with specified exceptions; and (2) a permitted disclosure relating to the privacy of individually identifiable health information. The VA may not recognize an employee for purposes of preparation, presentation, and prosecution of VA claims by reason of such system access. “Accredited, permanent congressional employee” means an employee of a Member of Congress who assists constituents with issues regarding federal departments or agencies. “Electronic VBA claims records system” means the VA system that provides claim status information, including information about medical records, compensation and pension exams records, rating
decisions, a statement of the case and a supplementary statement of the case, a notice of disagreement, and Form-9.

Legislative History

H.R. 5166 was introduced by Representative Ted Yoho on May 3, 2016 and was referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had 136 cosponsors, 30 of which were original cosponsors.

On June 23, 2016 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs held a legislative hearing on H.R. 5166 and received testimony from the following witnesses: the Honorable Doug Lamborn, U.S. House of Representatives, 1st Congressional District of Nevada; The Honorable Raul Ruiz U.S. House of Representatives, 36th Congressional District of California; The Honorable Beto O’Rourke, U.S. House of Representatives, 16th Congressional District of Texas; The Honorable Ron DeSantis, U.S. House of Representatives, 6th Congressional District of Florida; The Honorable Ted Yoho, U.S. House of Representatives, 3rd Congressional District of Florida; The Honorable Jody Hice, U.S. House of Representatives, 10th Congressional District of Georgia; The Honorable Dan Newhouse, U.S. House of Representatives, 4th Congressional District of Washington; and The Honorable David Young, U.S. House of Representatives, 3rd Congressional District of Iowa; The Honorable Sloan Gibson, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Deputy Secretary Gibson was accompanied by, Ms. Laura Eskenazi, Executive in Charge and Vice Chairman, Board of Veterans Appeals; Mr. David McLenachen, Deputy Under Secretary for Disability Assistance, Veterans Benefits Administration; and Dr. Maureen McCarthy, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health Patient Care Services, Veterans Health Administration within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Testimony was also provided by Mr. Raymond Kelley, Director, National Legislative Service of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Mr. Paul Varela, Assistant National Legislative Director with Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Carl Blake, Associate Executive Director of Government Relations with the Paralyzed Veterans of America; Mr. Louis J. Celli, Jr., Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division of The American Legion; and Mr. Rick Weidman, Executive Director for Policy and Government Affairs with the Vietnam Veterans of America; Statements for the Record were provided by the following Veterans Service Organizations: American Battle Monuments Commission, AMVETS, Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Military Officers Association of America, Military Veterans Advocacy, Inc., National Organization of Veterans Advocates, National Veterans Legal Services Program, P.A.W.S. Foundation, Stetson University College of Law’s Veterans Law Institute, U.S. Department of Labor.

On September 21, 2016 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs met in an open session and an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5166 was offered by Chairman Miller of Florida. The amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5166 was agreed to by the Full Committee via voice vote. H.R. 5166, as amended, passed the Full Committee via voice vote; A motion to favorably re-
port H.R. 5166, as amended, to the House of Representatives was offered by Acting Ranking Member Takano of California and agreed to via voice vote.

On November 29, 2016 the House agreed on a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 5166 by voice vote.

On November 30, 2016 H.R. 5166 was received in the Senate.

**IMPROVING TRANSITION PROGRAMS FOR ALL VETERANS ACT**

(H.R. 5229)

**Summary**

H.R. 5229, Improving Transition Programs for All Veterans Act, would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs to study and report on programs to assist veterans in their transition to civilian life. Such study shall determine the effectiveness of current programs, especially concerning the challenges faced by women veterans, veterans with disabilities, Native American veterans, veterans who are residents of a U.S. territory, veterans who are part of the indigenous population of a U.S. territory, and other groups of minority veterans with regard to: (1) pursuing higher education, (2) entering the civilian workforce and translating military experience and skills to the job market, and (3) transitioning to civilian life for veterans families.

H.R. 5229 would ensure that no additional funds are authorized to carry out the requirements of this bill. Such requirements shall be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized.

**Legislative History**

H.R. 5229 was introduced by Representative Mark Takano on May 13, 2016 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had one cosponsor.

On May 18, 2016 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs met in an open session and an amendment to H.R. 5229 was offered by Rep. Takano of California. The amendment to H.R. 5229 was agreed to by the Full Committee via voice vote. H.R. 5229, as amended passed the Full Committee via voice vote. A motion to favorably report H.R. 5229, as amended to the House of Representatives was offered by Ranking Member Brown and agreed to via voice vote.

On May 23, 2016 the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 5229, as amended by voice vote.

On May 24, 2016 H.R. 5229 was received in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

**TO DESIGNATE THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE CENTER IN CENTER TOWNSHIP, BUTLER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AS THE “ABIE ABRAHAM VA CLINIC”**

(H.R. 5317)

**Summary**

H.R. 5317, would designate the Department of Veterans Affairs health care center in Center Township, Butler County, Pennsylvania, as the “Abie Abraham VA Clinic.”
Legislative Summary

H.R. 5317 was introduced by Representative Mike Kelly on May 24, 2015 and referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had 17 cosponsors.

On June 21, 2016 the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 5317 as amended by voice vote.

On June 22, 2016 H.R. 5317 was received in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

NO VETERANS CRISIS LINE CALL SHOULD GO UNANSWERED ACT

(H.R. 5392)

Summary

H.R. 5392, No Veterans Crisis Line Call Should Go Unanswered Act, would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to develop a quality assurance document for carrying out the toll-free Veterans Crisis Line (VCL), which shall: (1) outline performance indicators and objectives to improve the VCL, including at backup call centers; (2) include time frames to meet such indicators and objectives; and (3) be consistent with guidance issued by the Office of Management and Budget. The VA shall develop a plan to ensure that each telephone call, text message, and other communications received by the VCL, including at backup call centers, is answered in a timely manner by a person, consistent with the guidance established by the American Association of Suicidology. The plan shall include guidelines for periodic VCL testing. The VA shall submit the document and plan within 180 days.

Legislative History

H.R. 5392 was introduced by Representative David Young on June 7, 2016 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had 26 cosponsors.

On June 23, 2016 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs held a legislative hearing on H.R. 5392 and received testimony from the following witnesses: the Honorable Doug Lamborn, U.S. House of Representatives, 1st Congressional District of Nevada; The Honorable Raul Ruiz U.S. House of Representatives, 36th Congressional District of California; The Honorable Beto O’Rourke, U.S. House of Representatives, 16th Congressional District of Texas; The Honorable Ron DeSantis, U.S. House of Representatives, 6th Congressional District of Florida; The Honorable Ted Yoho, U.S. House of Representatives, 3rd Congressional District of Florida; The Honorable Jody Hice, U.S. House of Representatives, 10th Congressional District of Georgia; The Honorable Dan Newhouse, U.S. House of Representatives, 4th Congressional District of Washington; and The Honorable David Young, U.S. House of Representatives, 3rd Congressional District of Iowa; The Honorable Sloan Gibson, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Deputy Secretary Gibson was accompanied by, Ms. Laura Eskenazi, Executive in Charge and Vice Chairman, Board of Veterans Appeals; Mr. David McLenachen, Deputy Under Secretary for Disability Assistance, Veterans Benefits Administration; and Dr. Maureen McCarthy, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health Patient Care
Services, Veterans Health Administration within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Testimony was also provided by Mr. Raymond Kelley, Director, National Legislative Service of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Mr. Paul Varela, Assistant National Legislative Director with Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Carl Blake, Associate Executive Director of Government Relations with the Paralyzed Veterans of America; Mr. Louis J. Celli, Jr., Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division of The American Legion; and Mr. Rick Weidman, Executive Director for Policy and Government Affairs with the Vietnam Veterans of America; Statements for the Record were provided by the following Veterans Service Organizations: American Battle Monuments Commission, AMVETS, Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Military Officers Association of America, Military Veterans Advocacy, Inc., National Organization of Veterans Advocates, National Veterans Legal Services Program, P.A.W.S. Foundation, Stetson University College of Law’s Veterans Law Institute, U.S. Department of Labor.

On September 21, 2016 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs met in an open session and a motion to favorably report H.R. 5392 to the House of Representatives was offered by Acting Ranking Member Takano of California and agreed to via voice vote.

On September 26, 2016 the House agreed on a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 5392 by 357 Yeas and 0 Nays.

On November 16, 2016 H.R. 5392 passed the Senate without amendment by Unanimous Consent.

On November 18, 2016 H.R. 5392 was presented to the President.

On November 28, 2016 H.R. 5392 was signed by the President and became Public Law No: 114–247.

ETHICAL PATIENT CARE FOR VETERANS ACT OF 2016
(H.R. 5399)

Summary

H.R. 5399, Ethical Patient Care for Veterans Act of 2016, would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to ensure that each VA physician is informed of the duty to report any covered activity committed by another physician that the physician witnesses or otherwise directly discovers to the applicable state licensing authority within five days. “Covered activity” means any activity occurring in a VA medical facility that consists of or causes the provision of impaired, incompetent, or unethical health care that requires direct reporting under the Code of Medical Ethics of the American Medical Association.

Legislative History

H.R. 5399 was introduced by Representative Phil Roe on June 7, 2016 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had no cosponsors.

On September 21, 2016 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs met in an open session and H.R. 5399 passed the Full Committee via voice vote. A motion to favorably report H.R. 5399 to the House of
Representatives was offered by Acting Ranking Member Takano of California and agreed to via voice vote. The Committee Report was filed on November 14, 2016 (H. Rept. 114–815).

On December 6, 2016 the House agreed on a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 5399 by voice vote.

On December 7, 2016 H.R. 5399 was received in the Senate.

TO NAME THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TEMPORARY LODGING FACILITY IN INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA, AS THE “DR. OTIS BOWEN VETERAN HOUSE”

(H.R. 5509)

Summary

H.R. 5509 would designate the Department of Veterans Affairs temporary lodging facility in Indianapolis, Indiana, as the “Dr. Otis Bowen Veteran House.”

Legislative History

H.R. 5509 was introduced by Representative Susan Brooks on June 16, 2016 and referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had 8 cosponsors.

On September 26, 2016 the House agreed on a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 5509 by voice vote.

On November 30, 2016 the Senate Committee on Veterans’ discharged H.R. 5509 by Unanimous Consent. H.R. 5509 was passed by the Senate without amendment by Unanimous Consent.

VETERANS COMPENSATION COLA ACT OF 2016

(H.R. 5588)

Summary

H.R. 5588, Veterans Compensation COLA Act of 2016, would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to increase, as of December 1, 2016, the rates of veterans’ disability compensation, additional compensation for dependents, the clothing allowance for certain disabled veterans, and dependency and indemnity compensation for surviving spouses and children. Each such increase shall be the same percentage as the increase in benefits provided under Title II (Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance [OASDI]) of the Social Security Act, on the same effective date.

H.R. 5588 would state that the VA shall publish such increased amounts in the Federal Register not later than the date on which certain OASDI cost-of-living increases are required to be published during FY2017.

Legislative History

H.R. 5588 was introduced by Representative Ralph Abraham on June 28, 2016 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had one cosponsor.

On July 11, 2016 the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 5588 by voice vote.

On July 13, 2016 H.R. 5588 passed the Senate without amendment by Unanimous Consent.
On July 14, 2016 H.R. 5599 was presented to the President. 
On July 22, 2016 H.R. 5599 was signed by the President and became Public Law No: 114–197.

NO HERO LEFT UNTREATED ACT
(H.R. 5600)

Summary

H.R. 5600, No Hero Left Untreated Act, would require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to carry out a one-year pilot program to provide access to magnetic EEG/EKG-guided resonance therapy technology to larger populations of veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, military sexual trauma, chronic pain, or opiate addiction. The VA shall carry out the program at up to five VA facilities, including the proposed Center for Innovation.

Legislative History

H.R. 5600 was introduced by Representative Stephen Knight on June 28, 2016 and was referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had 33 cosponsors, 18 of which were original cosponsors.

On September 21, 2016 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs met in an open session and an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5600 was offered by Rep. Jackie Walorski of Indiana. The amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5600 was agreed to by the Full Committee and H.R. 5600, as amended, passed the Full Committee via voice vote. A motion to favorably report H.R. 5600, as amended, to the House of Representatives was offered by Rep. Takano of California and agreed to via voice vote. The report was filed on November 14, 2016 (H. Rept. 114–817).

On November 29, 2016 the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 5600 voice vote.

On November 30, 2016 H.R. 5600 was received in the Senate.

VA ACCOUNTABILITY FIRST AND APPEALS MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2016
(H.R. 5620)

Summary

H.R. 5620, VA Accountability First and Appeals Modernization Act of 2016, would authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to remove or demote a VA employee based on performance or misconduct and provides that specified federal employee performance appraisal provisions shall not apply to such removals or demotions. The VA may remove such individual from the civil service or demote the individual through a reduction in grade or annual pay rate. A demoted individual shall not be placed on administrative leave or any other category of paid leave during the appeals period and can receive pay only if he or she reports for duty. An expedited appeals process is established under which: (1) an employee shall have the right to an appeal before the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) within seven days of removal or demotion, (2) the MSPB shall issue a decision within 60 days of the appeal or the
removal or demotion becomes final, (3) an MSPB decision and any final removal or demotion may be appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals, and (4) the MSPB may not stay any removal or demotion. The VA may not remove or demote an employee: (1) without the approval of the Special Counsel if the individual seeks corrective action from the Office of Special Counsel based on an alleged prohibited personnel practice, and (2) until a final decision in the case of a whistle blower complaint. The VA shall reduce the federal annuity of an individual removed from the VA Senior Executive Service (SES) who is convicted of a felony that influenced his or her performance while employed in such position. The VA may reduce the federal annuity of an individual who was convicted of such a felony and was subject to removal or transfer from the SES but who left the VA before final action was taken. The VA may recoup an award, a bonus, or relocation expenses paid to a VA employee under specified circumstances. The VA may suspend, reprimand or admonish an SES employee for misconduct or performance that does not merit removal. The VA must notify an individual five days before taking such proposed action. Appeals may be made to the Senior Executive Disciplinary Appeals Board (as provided for by this bill) and may not be appealed to the MSPB. The bill establishes an additional whistle blower complaint process, which shall include suspension and removal actions against supervisory employees who commit prohibited personnel actions against a whistle blower. The bill amends the disability benefits appeals process. The bill amends the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to prohibit payment of an award or bonus to any VA SES employee during each of FY2017–FY2021.

Legislative History

H.R. 5620 was introduced by Chairman Jeff Miller on July 5, 2016 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs in addition to the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. The bill had 34 cosponsors.

On September 14, 2016 H.R. 5620 passed the House by 310 Yeas and 116 Nays.

On September 15, 2016 H.R. 5620 was received in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

WEST LOS ANGELES LEASING ACT OF 2016

(H.R. 5936)

Summary

H.R. 5936, West Los Angeles Leasing Act of 2016, would authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to carry out the following leases at the VA’s West Los Angeles Campus in Los Angeles, California: any enhanced-use lease of real property for supportive housing that principally benefits veterans and their families; any lease of real property for not to exceed 50 years to a third party for services that principally benefit veterans and their families and that are related to health and wellness, education, vocational training and employment, peer activities or recreation, legal and federal benefits assistance, volunteerism, family support services, and transportation; and a lease of real property for up to 10
years to the Regents of the University of California, on behalf of the University of California, Los Angeles, if the lease is consistent with the VA master plan, the provision of veterans services is the predominant focus, and the Regents agree to provide non-VA compensated additional services that principally benefit veterans and their families. The VA shall not enter into land-sharing agreements unless the agreements provide additional health care resources and benefit veterans and their families in ways other than generating additional revenue. Funds received by the VA from a lease shall be credited to the applicable VA medical facilities account and shall be available, without fiscal year limitation and without further appropriation, exclusively for campus renovation and maintenance. The VA may, notwithstanding any other provision of law other than federal laws relating to environmental and historic preservation, grant easements or rights-of-way on, above, or under campus lands to: (1) any local or regional public transportation authority to construct, operate, or maintain public mass transit facilities; and (2) California, the County of Los Angeles, the City of Los Angeles, any agency or political subdivision thereof, or any public utility company for the purpose of providing public utilities. The VA may not sell or convey to a third party fee simple title to any real property or related improvements made at the campus. The VA shall ensure that each lease is consistent with the draft master plan approved by the VA on January 28, 2016, or successor master plans. The VA shall establish, within 180 days, a Community Veterans Engagement Board to coordinate locally with the VA to: (1) identify community goals; and (2) provide advice to improve services for veterans, members of the Armed Forces, and their families. The VA shall submit, annually, an evaluation of all campus leases and land-sharing agreements. The VA Inspector General shall report on: (1) all campus leases; and (2) the VA’s management of land use at the campus, including an assessment of efforts to implement the master plan.

H.R. 5936 would ensure the VA may not waive or postpone the obligation of a lessee to pay any consideration under an enhanced-use lease, including monthly rent. (The enhanced-use lease program is a program in which the VA leases under-utilized real estate to the private sector for developing supportive housing and other services for homeless and at-risk veterans and their families.) The bill provides that nothing in this bill shall be construed to: (1) authorize the VA to enter into an enhanced-use lease that authorizes the federal government to guarantee a third party loan to a lessee; and (2) abrogate or constitute a waiver of the sovereign immunity of the United States with respect to any financial agreement between a lessee and a third-party relating to an enhanced-use lease. The annual report on enhanced-use leases shall include: (1) identification of VA actions taken to implement and administer such leases, and (2) lease amounts deposited into the Medical Care Collection Fund account and the VA’s use of such funds. Such report shall also include with respect to each enhanced-use lease: (1) an overview of the VA’s use of consideration received to support veterans, (2) the amount of consideration received by the VA under or relating to the lease, and (3) the costs to the VA of carrying out the lease. The bill defines “major enhanced-use lease” as an en-
hanced-use lease that includes more than $10 million in average annual rent. The Government Accountability Office shall submit an audit of the enhanced-use lease program within 270 days.

Legislative History

H.R. 5936 was introduced by Chairman Jeff Miller on September 6, 2016 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The bill had one cosponsor.

On September 12, 2016 the House agreed on a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 5936, as amended by voice vote.

On September 19, 2016 H.R. 5936 passed the Senate without amendment by voice vote.

On September 21, 2016 H.R. 5936 was presented to the President.

On September 29, 2016 H.R. 5936 was signed by the President and became Public Law No: 114–226.

TO AMEND TITLE 36, UNITED STATES CODE, TO AUTHORIZE THE AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION TO ACQUIRE, OPERATE, AND MAINTAIN THE LAFAYETTE ESCADRILLE MEMORIAL IN MARNES–LA–COQUETTE, FRANCE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

(H.R. 5937)

Summary

H.R. 5937, would authorize the American Battle Monuments Commission to enter into an agreement with the Lafayette Escadrille Memorial Foundation to acquire, operate, and maintain the Lafayette Escadrille Memorial in Marnes-la-Coquette, France. The Commission shall ensure the ongoing maintenance of the memorial, including the cemetery containing the remains of 49 U.S. aviators who died during World War I.

Legislative History

H.R. 5937 was introduced by Chairman Jeff Miller on September 6, 2016 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs in addition to the Committee on Foreign Affairs. The bill had no cosponsors.

On September 12, 2016 the House agreed on a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 5937, as amended by voice vote.

On September 20, 2016 H.R. 5937 passed the Senate without amendment by Unanimous Consent.

On September 26, 2016 H.R. 5937 was presented to the President.

On September 29, 2016 H.R. 5937 was signed by the President and became Public Law No: 114–227.
H.R. 5985, Department of Veterans’ Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2016, would extend specified Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) programs.

H.R. 5985 would allow the authority for collection of copayments for hospital care and nursing home care is extended through FY2017.

H.R. 5985 would establish the requirement to provide nursing home care to certain veterans with service-connected disabilities is extended through December 31, 2017.

H.R. 5985 would require the authorization of appropriations for assistance and support services for caregivers is extended through FY2017.

H.R. 5985 would require the authority for recovery from third parties of the cost of care and services furnished to veterans with health-plan contracts for non-service-connected disability is extended through FY2017.

H.R. 5985 would state that the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 is amended to extend through December 31, 2017, authority for the pilot program on assistance for child care for certain veterans receiving health care. The authorization of appropriations for such program is extended through FY2017.

H.R. 5985 would establish the authority to make grants to veterans service organizations for transportation of highly rural veterans is extended through FY2017.

H.R. 5985 would establish the authority for the pilot program on counseling in retreat settings for women veterans newly separated from service is extended through December 31, 2017. The authorization of appropriations for such program is extended through FY2017.

H.R. 5985 would require the reporting date for the pilot program on the use of community organizations and state and local entities to ensure that veterans receive eligible benefits is changed from 180 days after the program’s completion to September 30, 2017.

H.R. 5985 would give authority for the Veterans’ Advisory Committee on Education is extended through December 31, 2017.

H.R. 5985 would specify housing loan provisions and definitions, including the calculation of the net value of real property at the time of foreclosure, are extended through FY2017.

H.R. 5985 would give authority relating to vendee loans is extended through FY2017.

H.R. 5985 would give authority for rehabilitation and vocational benefits at VA facilities for members of the Armed Forces with severe injuries or illnesses is extended through December 31, 2017.

H.R. 5985 would give authority for homeless veterans reintegration programs is extended through FY2017.
H.R. 5985 would ensure authority for the homeless women veterans and homeless veterans with children reintegration program is extended through FY2017.

H.R. 5985 would authorize for referral and counseling services for veterans at risk of homelessness who are transitioning from penal institutions or institutions that provide long-term mental health care is extended through FY2017.

H.R. 5985 would authorize for housing assistance for homeless veterans is extended through FY2017.

H.R. 5985 would authorize for financial assistance for supportive services for very low-income veteran families in permanent housing is extended through FY2017.

H.R. 5985 would authorize for the grant program for homeless veterans with special needs is extended through FY2017.

H.R. 5985 would authorize for the Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans is extended through December 31, 2017.

H.R. 5985 would authorize for treatment and rehabilitation services for seriously mentally ill and homeless veterans, including a program to provide homeless veterans with benefits and services at certain locations, is extended through FY2017.

H.R. 5985 would authorize for transportation of individuals to and from VA facilities for vocational rehabilitation, counseling, treatment, or care is extended through December 31, 2017.

H.R. 5985 would authorize for operation of the VA regional office in Manila, the Republic of the Philippines, is extended through FY2017.

H.R. 5985 would authorize for monthly assistance allowances under the Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events is extended through FY2017.

H.R. 5985 would establish the requirement to provide annual reports to Congress regarding equitable relief in the case of administrative error is extended through December 31, 2017.

H.R. 5985 would establish authorization for appropriations for adaptive sports programs for disabled veterans and members of the Armed Forces is extended through FY2017. The VA may only provide such assistance for adaptive sports opportunities during FY2010–FY2017.

H.R. 5985 would give authority for the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans is extended through December 31, 2017.

H.R. 5985 would give the authorization of appropriations for homeless veterans' comprehensive services is increased.

H.R. 5985 would give authority for temporary eligibility expansion for specially adapted housing assistance for certain veterans with disabilities causing difficulty ambulating is extended through FY2017. The VA may not approve more than 30 assistance applications in each of FY2014–FY2017.

H.R. 5985 would give authority for specially adapted housing assistive technology grants is extended through FY2017.

H.R. 5985 would state that the VA may not guarantee the payment of principal and interest on certain mortgage loan pool certificates or other securities issued or approved after December 31, 2017.

H.R. 5985 would give authority to enter into agreement with the National Academy of Sciences regarding associations between dis-
eases and exposure to dioxin and other chemical compounds in herbicides is extended through December 31, 2017.

H.R. 5985 would give authority for performance of medical disabilities examinations by contract physicians is extended through December 31, 2017.

H.R. 5985 would give the current multipliers used in calculating the fees the VA may pay to educational institutions and apprenticeship providers for reports regarding each eligible individual’s enrollment in veterans’ education or training programs and the interruption or termination of their participation in such programs is extended through FY2017.

H.R. 5985 would state that the requirement for an annual report on the Department of Defense-VA Interagency Program Office is extended through FY2017.

H.R. 5985 would state that in the case of an education course subject to disapproval because the Department of Education has withdrawn recognition of the accrediting agency, the VA may continue to treat the course as an approved course for up to 18 months unless the VA or the state approving agency determines that there is evidence to support such disapproval. The VA must notify any veteran enrolled in such course about its status.

Legislative History

H.R. 5985 was introduced by Chairman Jeff Miller on September 9, 2016 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs in addition to the Committees on Armed Services and Budget. The bill had no cosponsors.

On September 13, 2016 the House agreed on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 5985, as amended by voice vote.

On September 19, 2016 H.R. 5985 passed the Senate without amendment by 89 Yeas and 0 Nays.

On September 21, 2016 H.R. 5985 was presented to the President.

On September 29, 2016 H.R. 5985 was signed by the President and became Public Law No. 114–228.

TO NAME THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM IN LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA, THE “TIBOR RUBIN VA MEDICAL CENTER”

H.R. 6323

Summary

H.R. 6323 would name the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system in Long Beach, California, the “Tibor Rubin VA Medical Center.”

Legislative History

H.R. 6323 was introduced by Representative Alan Lowenthal on November 15, 2016 and referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had 51 cosponsors.

On November 29, 2016 the House agreed on a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 6323 by voice vote.

On November 30, 2016 H.R. 6323 was received in the Senate.
Summary

H.R. 6416, the Jeff Miller and Richard Blumenthal Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2016 would make a number of improvements to VA disability compensation, appeals, burial, education, vocational rehabilitation, small business, health care, and homeless programs.

The bill allows physicians who are under contract with VA and with unrestricted licenses to conduct disability examinations in any state as well as extends the expansion of the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims to nine judges through 2020, which would help the Court address its growing volume of cases. H.R. 6416 directs VA to provide a medallion to be affixed to a headstone in a private cemetery that signifies the grave of a veteran, permits VA to furnish a medallion specifically designed for the graves of Medal of Honor recipients, and provides Presidential Memorial Certificates to those who served in the National Guard or Reserve, even if they were never called to active duty.

Other provisions in this bill make needed improvements to education, vocational rehabilitation, and employment benefits by: prioritizing vocational rehabilitation services for our most disabled veterans; increasing approval and access to oversight processes for education programs and schools; improving coordination between federal and state agencies who provide employment services to veterans; expanding eligibility for work-study programs; extending the amount of time spouses of fallen servicemembers have to use the GI Bill's Fry Scholarship benefits; and, by extending the in-state tuition rate limit to dependents of servicemembers who are still serving on active duty.

H.R. 6416 contains numerous provisions that would improve the provision of VA health care by: requiring VA to produce an annual report on a number of critical measures of care; clarifying VA's responsibility to provide medical screenings and treatment to individuals requesting to be seen in a VA emergency room—including women in labor—and ensuring that VA emergency room physicians are afforded the schedule flexibility that the nature of their work demands; and, requiring VA to enter into an agreement with the National Academy of Medicine to conduct an assessment on scientific research relating to the descendants of individuals with toxic exposure and, depending on the results of those efforts, require VA to establish an advisory board to advise the Secretary on further research. The bill also includes provisions that would require reforms to VA's medical facility construction processes and procedures.

Legislative History

H.R. 6416 was introduced by Representative Phil Roe on December 1, 2016. The bill had 5 original cosponsors.

On December 6, 2016 the House agreed on a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 6416 by 419 Yeas and 0 Nays.
On December 7, 2016 H.R. 6416 was received in the Senate.

TO AUTHORIZE THE DIRECTORS OF VETERANS INTEGRATED SERVICE NETWORKS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO ENTER INTO CONTRACTS WITH APPROPRIATE CIVILIAN ACCREDITATION ENTITIES OR APPROPRIATE HEALTH CARE EVALUATION ENTITIES TO INVESTIGATE MEDICAL CENTERS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

(H.R. 6435)

Summary

H.R. 6435 would authorize the Directors of Veterans Integrated Service Networks of the Department of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts with appropriate civilian accreditation entities or appropriate health care evaluation entities to investigate medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Legislative History

H.R. 6435 was introduced by Representative Markwayne Mullin on December 5, 2016. The bill had no cosponsors. On December 7, 2016 the House agreed on a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 6435 by voice vote. On December 8, 2016 H.R. 6435 was received in the Senate.

VETERANS DAY MOMENT OF SILENCE ACT

(S. 1004)

Summary

S. 1004 would direct the President to issue an annual proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe two minutes of silence on Veterans Day, beginning at 3:11 p.m. Atlantic standard time, in honor of the service and sacrifice of veterans throughout the history of the nation.

Legislative History

S. 1004 was introduced by Senator Mark Steven Kirk on April 16, 2015 and referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill had 7 cosponsors, 5 of which were original. On November 9, 2015 the Senate Committee on the Judiciary discharged S. 1004 by Unanimous Consent. The Senate passed S. 1004 without amendment by Unanimous Consent. On September 27, 2016 S. 1004 passed the House without objection. On September 29, 2016 S. 1004 was presented to the President. On October 7, 2016 S. 1004 was signed by the President and became Public Law No. 114–240.

CHARLES DUNCAN BURIED WITH HONOR ACT OF 2016

(S. 3076)

Summary

S. 3076, Charles Duncan Buried with Honor Act of 2016, would authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), if it is unable
to identify a deceased veteran’s next of kin and if it determines that sufficient resources for the furnishing of a casket or urn for the burial of such veteran are not otherwise available, to furnish a casket or urn for the burial of such veteran in a national cemetery (current law) or in a veterans cemetery of a state or tribal organization for which the VA has provided a grant for the establishment, expansion, and improvement of veterans’ cemeteries.

Legislative History

S. 3076 was introduced by Senator Tom Cotton on June 20, 2016 and referred to the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had one cosponsor.

On September 20, 2016 S. 3076 was discharged from the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs by Unanimous Consent. S. 3076 passed the Senate with an amended by Unanimous Consent.

On September 26, 2016 S. 3076 was referred to the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs.

On December 6, 2016 the House agreed on a motion to suspend the rules and pass S. 3076 by voice vote.

On December 8, 2016 S. 3076 was presented to the President.

A BILL TO DESIGNATE THE COMMUNITY-BASED OUTPATIENT CLINIC OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS IN PUEBLO, COLORADO, AS THE “PFC JAMES DUNN VA CLINIC”

(S. 3283)

Summary

S. 3283 would designate the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Pueblo, Colorado, as the “PFC James Dunn VA Clinic.”

Legislative History

S. 3283 was introduced by Senator Cory Gardner on July 14, 2016. The bill had one cosponsor.

On July 14, 2016 S. 3283 was introduced in the Senate, read twice, considered, read a third time, and passed without amendment by Unanimous Consent.

On September 28, 2016 the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass S. 3283 by 423 Yeas, 0 Nays, and 1 Present.

On October 3, 2016 S. 3283 was presented to the President.

On October 7, 2016 S. 3283 was signed by the President and became Public Law No. 114–243.

A BILL TO DESIGNATE THE TRAVERSE CITY VA COMMUNITY-BASED OUTPATIENT CLINIC OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS IN TRAVERSE CITY, MICHIGAN, AS THE “COLONEL DEMAS T. CRAW VA CLINIC”

(S. 3492)

Summary

S. 3492 would designate the Traverse City VA Community-Based Outpatient Clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Traverse City, Michigan, as the “Colonel Demas T. Craw VA Clinic”.

Legislative History

S. 3492 was introduced by Senator Tom Cotton on June 20, 2016 and referred to the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The bill had one cosponsor.

On September 20, 2016 S. 3492 was discharged from the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs by Unanimous Consent. S. 3492 passed the Senate with an amended by Unanimous Consent.

On September 26, 2016 S. 3492 was referred to the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs.

On December 6, 2016 the House agreed on a motion to suspend the rules and pass S. 3492 by voice vote.

On December 8, 2016 S. 3492 was presented to the President.
Legislative History

S. 3492 was introduced by Senator Gary Peters on December 1, 2016. The bill had one original cosponsor.

On December 1, 2016 S. 3492 was read twice, considered, read a third time, and passed the Senate without amendment by Unanimous Consent.

On December 6, 2016 the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass S. 3492 by voice vote.

On December 8, 2016 S. 3492 was presented to the President.

Full Committee Markup of H.R. 4591; H.R. 4336; H.R. 4063; H.R. 4129; H.R. 1769; H.R. 3484; and H.R. 4590

On February 25, 2016, the Full Committee met and marked up H.R. 4591, to amend title 38, United States Code to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into agreements with certain health care providers to furnish hospital care, medical services, and extended care to veterans, introduced by Chairman Jeff Miller of Florida; H.R. 4336, the Women Airforce Service Pilot Arlington Inurnment Restoration Act, introduced by Rep. Martha McSally of Arizona; H.R. 4063, the Jason Simcakoski PROMISE Act, introduced by Rep. Gus Bilirakis of Florida; H.R. 4129, the Jumpstart VA Construction Act, introduced by Rep. Jerry McNerney of California; H.R. 1769, the Toxic Exposure Research Act of 2016, introduced by Rep. Dan Benishek of Michigan; H.R. 3484, the Los Angeles Homeless Veterans Leasing Act of 2016, introduced by Rep. Ted Lieu of California; and H.R. 4590, the Fiscal Year 2016 Department of Veterans Affairs Seismic Safety and Construction Authorization Act, introduced by Chairman Jeff Miller of Florida.

On February 25, 2016, an amendment to H.R. 4591 was offered by Rep. Mark Takano of California; an amendment to H.R. 4591 was offered by Rep. Phil Roe of Tennessee; and an amendment to H.R. 4591 was offered by Chairman Jeff Miller of Florida. The amendment to H.R. 4591 offered by Rep. Mark Takano of California was not agreed to via a roll call vote of 13 nays and 10 yeas. The amendment to H.R. 4591 offered by Rep. Phil Roe was agreed to via voice vote; the amendment to H.R. 4591 offered by Chairman Jeff Miller of Florida was also agreed to via voice vote. H.R. 4591, as amended, passed the Full Committee via voice vote. A motion to favorably report H.R. 4591, as amended to the House of Representatives was offered by Ranking Member Corrine Brown of Florida and agreed to via voice vote.

On February 25, 2016, an amendment in the nature of a substitute was offered by Rep. Ralph Abraham of Louisiana to H.R. 4336. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute was offered by Ranking Member Corrine Brown of Florida. The amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 4336 offered by Ranking Member Corrine Brown of Florida was agreed to by the Full Committee via voice vote. The amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 4336, as amended offered by Rep. Ralph Abraham of Louisiana was agreed to by the Full Committee via voice vote. H.R. 4336, as amended, passed the Full Committee via voice vote. A motion to favorably report H.R. 4336, as amended, to the House of Representa-
tives was offered by Ranking Member Corrine Brown of Florida and agreed to via voice vote.

On February 25, 2016, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 4063 was offered by Rep. Gus Bilirakis of Florida. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 4063 was offered by Rep. Jackie Walorski of Indiana, and a second amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 4063 was offered by Rep. Jackie Walorski of Indiana. The second amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 4063 offered by Rep. Jackie Walorski of Indiana was agreed to by the Full Committee via voice vote, the first amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 4063 offered by Rep. Jackie Walorski of Indiana was agreed to by the Full Committee via voice vote. The amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by Rep. Gus Bilirakis of Florida was agreed to by the Full Committee via voice vote and H.R. 4063, as amended, passed the Full Committee via voice vote. A motion to favorably report H.R. 4063, as amended, to the House of Representatives was offered by Ranking Member Corrine Brown of Florida and agreed to via voice vote.

On February 25, 2016, H.R. 4129 passed the Full Committee via voice vote. A motion to favorably report H.R. 4129 to the House of Representatives was offered by Ranking Member Corrine Brown of Florida and agreed to via voice vote.

On February 25, 2016, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1769 was offered by Rep. Dan Benishek of Michigan. The amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1769 was agreed to by the Full Committee via voice vote and H.R. 1769, as amended, passed the Full Committee via voice vote. A motion to favorably report H.R. 1769, as amended, to the House of Representatives was offered by Ranking Member Corrine Brown of Florida and agreed to via voice vote.

On February 25, 2016, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3484 was offered by Chairman Jeff Miller of Florida. The A.N.S. to H.R. 3484 was agreed to by the Full Committee via voice vote and H.R. 3484, as amended, passed the Full Committee via voice vote. A motion to favorably report H.R. 3484, as amended, to the House of Representatives was offered by Ranking Member Corrine Brown of Florida and agreed to via voice vote.

On February 25, 2016, an amendment to H.R. 4590 was offered by Rep. Mike Coffman of Colorado. An amendment to H.R. 4590 was also offered by Rep. Kathleen Rice of New York. The amendment to H.R. 4590 offered by Rep. Kathleen Rice of New York was agreed to by the Full Committee via voice vote. The amendment to H.R. 4590 offered by Rep. Mike Coffman of Colorado was also agreed to by the Full Committee via voice vote. H.R. 4590, as amended, passed the Full Committee via voice vote and a motion to favorably report H.R. 4590, as amended, to the House of Representatives was offered by Ranking Member Corrine Brown of Florida and agreed to via voice vote.
Markup of H.R. 5178; H.R. 5229; H.R. 4138; H.R. 3286, as Amended; H.R. 3471, as Amended; H.R. 3974, as Amended; H.R. 3956; H.R. 4782; H.R. 4087, as Amended; H.R. 2460; H.R. 3989, as Amended; and H.R. 3715, as Amended

On Wednesday, May 18, 2016, the Full Committee met to mark up H.R. 5178, the Veterans Success on Campus Act of 2016, introduced by Rep. Brad Wenstrup of Ohio; H.R. 5229, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a study to evaluate the effectiveness of programs, especially in regards to women veterans and minority veterans, in transitioning to civilian life, and for other purposes, introduced by Rep. Mark Takano of California; H.R. 4138, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to recoup relocation expenses paid to or on behalf of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, introduced by Chairman Jeff Miller of Florida; H.R. 3286, as amended, the HIRE Vets Act, introduced by Rep. Paul Cook of California; H.R. 3471, as amended, the Veterans Mobility Safety Act of 2015, introduced by Rep. Jackie Walorski of Indiana; H.R. 3974, as amended, the Grow Our Own Directive: Physician Assistant Employment and Education Act of 2015, introduced by Rep. Ann Kuster of New Hampshire; H.R. 3956, the VA Health Center Management Stability and Improvement Act, introduced by Rep. Mike Bost of Illinois; H.R. 4782, the Veterans’ Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2016, introduced by Rep. Ralph Abraham of Louisiana; H.R. 4087, as amended, the Fair Treatment for Families of Veterans Act, introduced by Rep. Mia Love of Utah; H.R. 2460, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of adult day health care services for veterans, introduced by Rep. Lee Zeldin of New York; H.R. 3989, as amended, Support Our Military Caregivers Act, introduced by Rep. Elise Stefanik of New York; and H.R. 3715, as amended, the Final Farewell Act of 2015, introduced by Ranking Member Corrine Brown of Florida.

On May 18, 2016, amendments in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5178 were offered by Rep. Brad Wenstrup of Ohio and Rep. Mark Takano of California. The amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5178 offered by Rep. Mark Takano of California failed and was not agreed to by the Full Committee on a recorded vote of 10 yeas and 13 noes with 1 Member not voting. The amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5178 offered by Rep. Brad Wenstrup of Ohio was agreed to by the Full Committee by a recorded vote of 14 yeas, 9 noes and 1 Member not voting. H.R. 5178, as amended, passed the Full Committee via voice vote. A motion to favorably report H.R. 5178, as amended, to the House of Representatives was offered by Rep. Doug Lamborn of Colorado and agreed to via voice vote.

On May 18, 2016, an amendment to H.R. 5229 was offered by Rep. Mark Takano of California. The amendment to H.R. 5229 was agreed to by the Full Committee via voice vote. H.R. 5229, as amended, passed the Full Committee via voice vote. A motion to favorably report H.R. 5229, as amended, to the House of Representatives was offered by Ranking Member Corrine Brown of Florida and agreed to via voice vote.

On May 18, 2016, an amendment to H.R. 4138 was offered by Rep. Kathleen Rice of New York. The amendment to H.R. 4138
failed and was not agreed to by the Full Committee by a recorded vote of 9 yeas, 13 noes and 2 Members not voting. H.R. 4138 passed the Full Committee via recorded vote of 18 yeas and 4 noes with 2 Members not voting. A motion to favorably report H.R. 4138 to the House of Representatives was offered by Rep. Doug Lamborn of Colorado and agreed to via voice vote.

On May 18, 2016, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3286, as amended, was offered by Chairman Jeff Miller of Florida and was agreed to by the Full Committee via voice vote. H.R. 3286, as amended, passed the Full Committee via voice vote and a motion to favorably report H.R. 3286, as amended, to the House of Representatives was offered by Ranking Member Corrine Brown of Florida and agreed to via voice vote.

On May 18, 2016, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3471 was offered by Rep. Jackie Walorski of Indiana. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3471 was offered by Rep. Dan Benishek of Michigan. The amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3471 offered by Rep. Dan Benishek of Michigan was agreed to by the Full Committee via a voice vote. The amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended, to H.R. 3471, as amended, was agreed to by the Full Committee via a voice vote; H.R. 3471, as amended, passed the Full Committee via voice vote. A motion to favorably report H.R. 3471, as amended, to the House of Representatives was offered by Ranking Member Corrine Brown of Florida and agreed to via voice vote.

On May 18, 2016, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3974, as amended, was offered by Rep. Ann Kuster of New Hampshire. The amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3974, as amended, was agreed to by the Full Committee via voice vote. H.R. 3974, as amended, passed the Full Committee via voice vote. A motion to favorably report H.R. 3974, as amended, to the House of Representatives was offered by Ranking Member Brown and agreed to via voice vote.

On May 18, 2016, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3956 was offered by Rep. Mike Bost of Indiana. The amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3956 was agreed to by the Full Committee via voice vote. H.R. 3956, as amended, passed the Full Committee via voice vote. A motion to favorably report H.R. 3956, as amended, to the House of Representatives was offered by Ranking Member Corrine Brown of Florida and agreed to via voice vote.

On May 18, 2016, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 4782 was offered by Rep. Ralph Abraham of Louisiana. An additional amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute was offered by Ranking Member Corrine Brown of Florida and an amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute was offered by Rep. Julia Brownley of California. The amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by Rep. Julia Brownley of California was officially withdrawn from the markup agenda by Rep. Julia Brownley of California. The amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by Ranking Member Corrine Brown of Florida failed and was not agreed to by the Full Committee by a recorded vote of 9 yeas and
13 noes with 2 Members not voting. The amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 4782 offered by Rep. Ralph Abraham of Louisiana was agreed to by the Full Committee via voice. H.R. 4782, as amended, passed the Full Committee via voice vote. A motion to favorably report H.R. 4782, as amended, to the House of Representatives was offered by Rep. Doug Lamborn of Colorado and agreed to via voice vote.

On May 18, 2016, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 4087, as amended, was offered by Chairman Jeff Miller of Florida. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute was offered by Ranking Member Corrine Brown of Florida. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute was offered by Rep. Julia Brownley of California. The amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by Rep. Julia Brownley of California failed and was not agreed to by the Full Committee recorded vote of 9 yeas and 13 noes with 2 Members not voting. The amendment to the Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute offered by Ranking Member Corrine Brown of Florida failed and was not agreed to by the Full Committee by a recorded vote of 8 yeas, 14 noes, and 2 Members not voting. The amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 4087 offered by Chairman Jeff Miller of Florida was agreed to by the Full Committee by a recorded vote of 14 yeas, 8 noes, and 2 Members not voting. H.R. 4087, as amended, passed the Full Committee by a recorded vote of 14 yeas and 8 noes with 2 Members not voting. A motion to favorably report H.R. 4087, as amended, to the House of Representatives was offered by Rep. Doug Lamborn of Colorado and agreed to via voice vote.

On May 18, 2016, H.R. 2460; H.R. 3989, as amended; and H.R. 3715, as amended, were considered en bloc and passed the Full Committee via voice vote. A motion to favorably report H.R. 2460; H.R. 3989, as amended; and H.R. 3715, as amended, to the House of Representatives was offered by Ranking Member Corrine Brown of Florida and was agreed to via voice vote.


On Thursday, June 23, 2016, the Full Committee met in open session and conducted a legislative hearing on H.R. 3216, the VET Act; H.R. 4150, the Department of Veterans Affairs Emergency Medical Staffing Recruitment and Retention Act; H.R. 4764, the Puppies Assisting Wounded Servicemembers (PAWS) Act of 2016; H.R. 5047, the Protecting Veterans' Educational Choice Act of 2016; H.R. 5083, the VA Appeals Modernization Act of 2016; H.R. 5162, the Vet Connect Act of 2016; H.R. 5166, the WINGMAN Act; H.R. 5392, the No Veterans Crisis Line Call Should Go Unanswered Act; H.R. 5407, to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Labor to prioritize the provision of services to homeless veterans with dependent children in carrying out homeless veterans reintegration programs, and for other purposes; H.R. 5416, to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand burial benefits for veterans who die while receiving hospital care or medical services under the Veterans Choice Program of the Department
of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; H.R. 5420, to authorize the American Battle Monuments Commission to acquire, operate, and maintain the Lafayette Escadrille Memorial in Marne-la-Coquette, France; and H.R. 5428, Military Residency Choice Act.

On panel one, testimony was provided by: the Honorable Doug Lamborn, U.S. House of Representatives, 1st Congressional District of Colorado; the Honorable Raul Ruiz, U.S. House of Representatives, 36th Congressional District of California; the Honorable Beto O'Rourke, U.S. House of Representatives, 16th Congressional District of Texas; the Honorable Ron DeSantis, U.S. House of Representatives, 6th Congressional District of Florida; the Honorable Ted Yoho, U.S. House of Representatives, 3rd Congressional District of Florida; the Honorable Jody Hice, U.S. House of Representatives, 10th Congressional District of Georgia; the Honorable Dan Newhouse, U.S. House of Representatives, 4th Congressional District of Washington; and the Honorable David Young, U.S. House of Representatives, 3rd Congressional District of Iowa.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: the Honorable Sloan Gibson, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; accompanied by: Laura Eskkenazi, Executive in Charge and Vice Chairman, Board of Veterans Appeals; David McLamehen, Deputy Under Secretary for Disability Assistance, Veterans Benefits Administration; and, Maureen McCarthy, M.D., Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health Patient Care Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Testimony was also provided by: Raymond Kelley, Director, National Legislative Service of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Paul Varela, Assistant National Legislative Director with Disabled American Veterans; Carl Blake, Associate Executive Director of Government Relations with the Paralyzed Veterans of America; Louis J. Celli, Jr., Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division of The American Legion; and Rick Weidman, Executive Director for Policy and Government Affairs with the Vietnam Veterans of America.


**Markup of H.R. 4757, as Amended; H.R. 5166; H.R. 4150; H.R. 5099; H.R. 5600; H.R. 5047; H.R. 5428; H.R. 3216; H.R. 5162; H.R. 5392; H.R. 5399**

On Wednesday, September 21, 2016, the Full Committee met and marked up H.R. 4757, as amended, to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand the eligibility for headstones, markers, and medallions furnished by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for deceased individuals who were awarded the Medal of Honor and are

On September 21, 2016, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 4757, as amended, was offered by Rep. Jeff Miller of Florida. The amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 4757, as amended, was agreed to by the Full Committee via voice vote. H.R. 4757, as amended, passed the Full Committee via voice vote. A motion to favorably report H.R. 4757, as amended, to the House of Representatives was offered by Acting Ranking Member Mark Takano of California and agreed to via voice vote.

On September 21, 2016, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5166 was offered by Chairman Jeff Miller of Florida. The amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5166 was agreed to by the Full Committee via voice vote. H.R. 5166, as amended, passed the Full Committee via voice vote. A motion to favorably report H.R. 5166, as amended, to the House of Representatives was offered by Acting Ranking Member Mark Takano of California and agreed to via voice vote.

On September 21, 2016, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 4150 was offered by Rep. Raul Ruiz of California. The amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 4150 was agreed to by the Full Committee and passed the Full Committee via voice vote. A motion to favorably report H.R. 4150, as amended, to the House of Representatives was offered by Rep. Mark Takano of California and agreed to via voice vote.

On September 21, 2016, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5099 was offered by Rep. Tim Walz of Minnesota. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute was offered by Rep. Julia Brownley of California. The amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by Rep. Julia Brownley of California was officially withdrawn from the markup agenda by Rep. Julia Brownley of California. The amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5099 was agreed to by the Full Committee via voice vote. H.R. 5099, as amended, passed the Full Committee via voice vote. A motion to favorably report H.R. 5099, as amended, to the House of Representatives was offered by Acting
Ranking Member Mark Takano of California and agreed to via voice vote.

On September 21, 2016, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5600 was offered by Rep. Jackie Walorski of Indiana. The amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5600 was agreed to by the Full Committee and H.R. 5600, as amended, passed the Full Committee via voice vote. A motion to favorably report H.R. 5600, as amended, to the House of Representatives was offered by Acting Ranking Member Mark Takano of California and agreed to via voice vote.

On September 21, 2016, H.R. 5047, H.R. 5428, H.R. 3216, H.R. 5162, H.R. 5392, and H.R. 5399 were considered en bloc and passed the Full Committee via voice vote. A motion to favorably report H.R. 5047, H.R. 5428, H.R. 3216, H.R. 5162, H.R. 5392, and H.R. 5399 to the House of Representatives was offered by Acting Ranking Member Mark Takano of California and agreed to via voice vote.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS’ AFFAIRS
FULL COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES
Second Session
Full Committee Hearing—1988 To 2016: VETSNET To VBMS; Billions Spent, Backlog Grinds on

On Tuesday, January 12, 2016, the Full Committee met in open session to conduct a hearing to review the Veterans Benefits Management System.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: Beth McCoy, Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Dawn Bontempo, Director Veterans Benefits Management System Program Management Office; Steven Schliesman, Assistant Deputy Chief Information Officer, Office of Information & Technology; and Thomas Murphy Director, Compensation Service Veterans Benefits Administration. Valerie C. Melvin Director, Information Technology at the U.S. Government Accountability Office, Brent Arronte, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Audits and Evaluations, Office of Inspector General within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs also provided testimony; Accompanied by: Michael Bowman Director, Information Technology and Security Audits Division, Office of Inspector General. See, “1988 to 2016: VETSNET to VBMS; Billions Spent, Backlog Grinds On,” Serial No. 114–49.

Site Visit—Los Angeles, California

On January 19, 2016, the Chairman of the Full Committee traveled to Los Angeles California, to conduct an oversight visit of the Los Angeles National Cemetery.

Full Committee Hearing—Lost Opportunities for Veterans
An Examination of VA’s Technology Transfer Program

On February 3, 2016, the Full Committee met in open session and conducted a hearing to examine the Department’s technology transfer program.
On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: David Shulkin, M.D., Under Secretary for Health, Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Kyong-Mi Chang, M.D., Chief Research and Development Officer with the Veterans Health Administration; and Marisue Cody, Ph.D., Director of Operations, Office of Research and Development. See “Lost Opportunities for Veterans: An Examination of VA’s Technology Transfer Program,” Serial No. 114–52.

Full Committee Hearing—U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2017

On February 10, 2016, the Full Committee met in open session and conducted a hearing to review the Department’s budget for Fiscal Year 2017.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: the Honorable Robert A. McDonald, Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: the Honorable David Shulkin, Under Secretary for Health; Danny Pummill, Acting Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration; Ronald Walters, Interim Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, the Honorable LaVerne Council, Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology and Chief Information Officer, Office of Information and Technology; and, Ed Murray, Interim Secretary for Management and Interim Chief Financial Officer.

Statements for the Record were provided by the U.S. Government Accountability Office, Co-Authors of the Independent Budget, AMVETS, and The American Legion. See, “U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2017,” Serial No. 114–53.

Full Committee Hearing—Joint Hearing of the House and Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committees To Receive the Legislative Presentation of the Disabled American Veterans

On February 23, 2016, the Full Committee participated in a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee to receive testimony from the Disabled American Veterans on its 2016 legislative priorities.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: Moses A. McIntosh, Jr., National Commander, Disabled American Veterans; Accompanied by: J. Marc Burgess, National Adjutant; Barry A. Jesinoski, Executive Director, National Headquarters; Garry J. Augustine, Executive Director, Washington Headquarters; Jim Marszalek, National Service Director; Joy J. Ilem, National Legislative Director; John Kleindienst, National Director of Voluntary Service; Jeffrey C. Hall, National Director of Employment; and, Linda Stake, DAV Auxiliary National Commander. See, “Joint Hearing of the House and Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committees to receive the Legislative Presentation of the Disabled American Veterans,” Serial No. 114–57.
Full Committee Hearing—Joint Hearing of the House and Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committees To Receive the Legislative Presentation of the American Legion

On February 24, 2016, the Full Committee participated in a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee to receive testimony from The American Legion on its 2016 legislative priorities.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: Dale Barnett, National Commander of The American Legion; Accompanied by: Brett Reistad, Chairman, National Legislative Commission; Ralph Bozella, Chairman, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission; Ian dePlanque, Director, National Legislative Division; Louis Celli Jr., Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division; James W. Oxford, Chairman, Veterans Employment & Education Commission; and Joseph Sharpe, Jr., Director, Veterans Employment & Education Division. This hearing was hosted by the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee and therefore does not have a House Serial No.

Full Committee Hearing—Joint Hearing of the House and Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committees To Receive the Legislative Presentation of the Veterans of Foreign Wars

On March 2, 2016, the Full Committee participated in a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee to receive testimony from the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: John Biedrzycki, Commander in Chief, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Accompanied by: Jerry Manar, Director, National Veterans Service; Bob Wallace, Executive Director; Ray Kelley, Director, National Legislative Service; and Al Bucchi, National Legislative Chairman. This hearing was hosted by the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee and therefore does not have a House Serial No.

Full Committee Hearing—Joint Hearing of the House and Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committees To Receive the Legislative Presentation From BVA, GSW, VVA, MOPH, WWP, NGAUS, AMVETS and PVA

On March 3, 2016, the Full Committee participated in a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee to receive testimony from multiple Veterans Service Organizations.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: Robert “Dale” Stamper, National President, Blinded Veterans Association; Christine Kinnard, Co-Chair for Government Relations Committee, Gold Star Wives of America; Marsha Tansey Four, Vice President, Vietnam Veterans of America; Robert Puskar, National Commander, Military Order of the Purple Heart; Ryan Kules, Combat Stress Recovery Director, Wounded Warrior Project; Mike Waite, Legislative Director, National Guard Association of the United States; James D. Pidgeon, National Commander, AMVETS; and Al Kovach, Jr., National President, Paralyzed Veterans of America.

Statements for the Record were provided by: The Association of the United States Army, The Association of the United States Navy, and the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor Memorial Society. See, “Joint Hearing of the House and Senate Vet-
Full Committee Hearing—Joint Hearing of the House and Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committees To Receive the Legislative Presentation From FRA, TREA, NASDVA, MOAA, AFSA, AMERICAN EX-POW, NCOA, JWV and IAVA

On March 16, 2016, the Full Committee participated in a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee to receive testimony from multiple Veterans Service Organizations.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: Virgil Courneya, National President, Fleet Reserve Association; Larry Hyland, National President, The Retired Enlisted Association; David Brasuell, President, Idaho, National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs; Rene Campos, Deputy Director, Government Relations, Military Officers Association of America; Rob Frank, Chief Executive Officer, Air Force Sergeants Association; Charles Susino, Jr., Past National Commander/Legislative Officer, American Ex Prisoners of War; Sgt. Major H. Gene Overstreet, President, Non Commissioned Officers Association; Jerome Blum, National Commander, Jewish War Veterans; and, Paul Rieckhoff, Founder and CEO, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. This hearing was hosted by the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee and therefore does not have a House Serial No.

Site Visit—Salem, Virginia

On March 24, 2016, the Chairman of the Full Committee traveled to Salem, Virginia, to conduct an oversight visit to the Salem VA Medical Center.

Full Committee Hearing—A Continued Assessment of Delays in Veterans’ Access to Health Care

On April 19, 2016, the Full Committee met in open session to conduct a hearing reviewing the delays in veterans’ access to health care.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: the Honorable David Shulkin, M.D., Under Secretary for Health, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Thomas Lynch, M.D., Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Clinical Operations. Also providing testimony, Debra Draper, Director, Health Care Team with the U.S. Government Accountability Office and Larry Reinkemeyer, Director, Kansas City Office of Audits and Evaluations, Office of Inspector General within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Gary Abe, Acting Assistant Inspector, General for Audits and Evaluations with the Office of Inspector General.

A statement for the record was provided by The American Legion. See “A Continued Assessment of Delays in Veterans’ Access to Health Care,” Serial No. 114–65.
Full Committee Hearing—Combating the Crisis: Evaluating Efforts To Prevent Veteran Suicide

On May 12, 2016, the Full Committee met in open session to review the Department’s efforts to prevent veteran suicide. On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: Maureen McCarthy, M.D., Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Patient Care Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Harold Kudler, M.D., Chief Consultant for Mental Health Services; and Caitlin Thompson, M.D., National Director for Suicide Prevention. The following individuals also provided testimony: Jackie Maffucci, M.D., Research Director, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; Thomas Berger, Executive Director of the Veterans Health Council, Vietnam Veterans of America; Kim Ruocco, Chief External Relations Officer for Suicide Prevention and Postvention, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors; and, Joy J. Ilem, National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans.

A statement for the record was provided by the Centerstone Military Services. See “Combating the Crisis: Evaluating Efforts to Prevent Veteran Suicide,” Serial No. 114–68.

Site Visit—Fort Harrison, Montana

On July 29, 2016, the Chairman of the Full Committee traveled to Fort Harrison, Montana, to conduct an oversight visit to the Fort Harrison regional office.

Site Visit—Wichita, Kansas

On July 29, 2016, the Chairman of the Full Committee traveled to Wichita, Kansas, to conduct an oversight visit to the Robert J. Dole VA Medical Center.

Site Visit—St. Louis, Missouri

On August 2, 2016, the Chairman of the Full Committee traveled to St. Louis, Missouri, to conduct an oversight visit to the VA St. Louis Health Care System—John Cochran Division.

Site Visit—Fort Harrison, Montana

On August 3, 2016, the Chairman of the Full Committee traveled to Fort Harrison, Montana, to conduct an oversight visit to the VA Montana Health Care System.

Site Visit—Omaha, Nebraska

On August 5, 2016, the Chairman of the Full Committee traveled to Omaha, Nebraska, to attend the dedication of the Omaha National Cemetery.

Full Committee Business Meeting—Motions To Subpoena Information From the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

On September 7, 2016, the Full Committee met in open session to submit a motion to issue a subpoena to the Honorable Robert A. McDonald, in his capacity as Secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, to produce certain documentation to the Committee pertaining to: a) spending on artwork and ornamental furnishings from fiscal year 2010 to present; and b) evidentiary files
associated with the Administrative Investigation Board convened on the Aurora, Colorado Replacement Medical Center construction project.

**Full Committee Hearing—From Tumult To Transformation: The Commission on Care and the Future of the VA Healthcare System**

On September 7, 2016, the Full Committee met in open session to discuss the analysis and recommendations included in the final report authored by the Commission on Care.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: Nancy Schlichting, Chairperson Commission on Care; and, Delos M. (Toby) Cosgrove, M.D., Vice Chairperson, Commission on Care.


**Full Committee Hearing—An Examination of VA’s Misuse of Settlement Agreements**

On September 14, 2016, the Full Committee met in open session to conduct a hearing reviewing the Department’s misuse of settlement agreements.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by the Honorable Leigh Bradley, General Counsel at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: James Manker, Jr., Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits and Steve Young, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Testimony was also provided by Eric Bachman, Deputy Special Counsel for Litigation and Legal Affairs at the U.S. Office of Special Counsel. See, “An Examination of VA’s Misuse of Settlement Agreements,” Serial No. 114–79.

**Full Committee Field Hearing—An Assessment of Deficiencies at the Northport VA Medical Center**

On September 20, 2016, the Full Committee met in open session to conduct a field hearing at Northport VA Medical Center in Northport, New York to assess its deficiencies.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Joan E. McInerney, M.D., M.A., M.B.A., F.A.C.E., Network Director, Veterans Integrated Service Network 2, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Phillip C. Moschitta, Director, Northport VA Medical Center; and Charlene M. Thomesen, M.D., Chief of Psychiatry, Northport VA Medical Center. Testimony was also provided by Mayer Bellehsen, Ph.D., Director, Mildred and Frank Feinberg Division, Unified Behavioral Health Center for Military

FULL COMMITTEE ROUNDTABLE—

On December 6, 2016, the Full Committee held a roundtable with Members of the Committee, multiple Veterans Service Organizations and award-winning journalist, author and documentarian, Sebastian Junger. During the roundtable, Junger discussed his latest book, Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging, which discusses themes of transition, mental health, and the need for inclusion among servicemembers and veterans.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON DISABILITY ASSISTANCE AND MEMORIAL AFFAIRS

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

First Session

Subcommittee Hearing—Legislative Hearing on H.R. 675; H.R. 677; H.R. 732; H.R. 800; H.R. 1067; H.R. 1331; H.R. 1379; H.R. 1414; H.R. 1569; and H.R. 1607

On April 14, 2015, the DAMA Subcommittee held a legislative hearing on H.R. 675, the Veterans’ Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2015; H.R. 677, the American Heroes COLA Act of 2015; H.R. 732, the Veterans Access to Speedy Review Act; H.R. 800, the Express Appeals Act; H.R. 1067, U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims Reform Act; H.R. 1331, the Quicker Veterans Benefits Delivery Act of 2015; H.R. 1379, to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Board of Veterans’ Appeals to develop evidence in appeal cases, and for other purposes; H.R. 1414, the Pay As You Rate Act; H.R. 1569, to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify that the estate of a deceased veteran may receive certain accrued benefits upon the death of the veteran, and for other purposes; and H.R. 1607, the Ruth Moore Act of 2015.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by The Honorable Chellie Pingree, U.S. House of Representatives.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. David R. McLenachen, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Disability Assistance, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. McLenachen was accompanied by Ms. Laura H. Eskenazi, Executive-in-Charge and Vice Chairman, Board of Veterans’ Appeals, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. David J. Barrans, Assistant General Counsel, Office of General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Zachary Hearn, Deputy Director for Claims, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Mr. Blake C. Ortner, Deputy Government Relations Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Mr. Paul R. Varela, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Ronald B. Abrams, Joint Executive Director, National Veterans Legal Services Program; Mr. Kenneth M. Carpenter, Founding Member, National Organization of Veterans’ Advocates. See “Legislative Hearing on H.R. 675; H.R. 677;


On May 14, 2015, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs met and marked up H.R. 1067, the U.S. court of Appeals for Veterans Claims Reform Act, introduced by Representative Ryan Costello of Pennsylvania; H.R. 1414, the Pay As You Rate Act, introduced by Representative Dina Titus of Nevada; H.R. 732, the Veterans Access to Speedy Review Act, introduced by Representative Raul Ruiz of California; H.R. 1607, the Ruth Moore Act of 2015, introduced by Representative Chellie Pingree of Maine; en Bloc H.R. 675, the Veterans’ Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2015, introduced by Representative Ralph Abraham of Louisiana; H.R. 677, the American Heroes COLA Act of 2015, introduced by Representative Ralph Abraham of Louisiana; H.R. 1331, the Quicker Veterans Benefits Delivery Act of 2015, introduced by Representative Timothy Walz of Minnesota; and H.R. 1569, to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify that the estate of a deceased veteran may receive certain accrued benefits upon the death of the veteran, and for other purposes, introduced by Representative Lee Zeldin of New York.

On May 14, 2015, an amendment to H.R. 1067 was offered by Representative Ryan Costello of Pennsylvania and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 1067, as amended passed the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On May 14, 2015, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1015 was offered by Representative Dina Titus of Nevada and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 1414, as amended passed the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On May 14, 2015, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 732 was offered by Representative Raul Ruiz of California and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 732, as amended passed the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On May 14, 2015, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1017 was offered by Representative Dina Titus of Nevada and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 1607, as amended passed the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On May 14, 2015, the bills considered en Bloc (H.R. 675 introduced by Representative Ralph Abraham of Louisiana; H.R. 677 introduced by Representative Ralph Abraham of Louisiana; H.R. 1331 introduced by Representative Timothy Walz of Minnesota; and H.R. 1569 introduced by Representative Lee Zeldin of New York) passed the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.
Subcommittee Hearing—Legislative Hearing on H.R. 2214; H.R. 1380; H.R. 2706; H.R. 2691; H.R. 303; H.R. 1338; H.R. 1302; H.R. 2605; and H.R. 1384

On June 24, 2015, the DAMA Subcommittee held a legislative hearing on H.R. 2214, the Disabled Veterans’ Access to Medical Exams Improvement Act; H.R. 1380, to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand the eligibility for a medallion furnished by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to signify the veteran status of a deceased individual; H.R. 2706, the Veterans National Remembrance Act; H.R. 2691, the Veterans’ Survivors Claims Processing Automation Act of 2015; H.R. 303, the Retired Pay Restoration Act; H.R. 1338, the Dignified Interment of Our Veterans Act of 2015; H.R. 1302, the VA Appeals Backlog Relief Act; H.R. 2605, the Veterans Fiduciary Reform Act of 2015; and H.R. 1384, the Honor America’s Guard-Reserve Retirees Act.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by The Honorable Bill Johnson, U.S. House of Representatives.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. David R. McLachlan, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Disability Assistance Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs who was accompanied by Mr. Matthew Sullivan, Deputy Under Secretary for Finance and Planning, and CFO National Cemetery Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and was also accompanied by Mr. David Barrans, Assistant General Counsel Office of General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Zachary Hearn, Deputy Director for Claims Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Mr. Paul R. Varela, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Aleks Morosky, Deputy Director National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Ms. Diane Zumatto, National Legislative Director, AMVETS; Mr. Chris Neiweem, Legislative Associate, Iraq and Afghanistan, Veterans of America. See "Legislative Hearing on H.R. 2214; H.R. 1380; H.R. 2706; H.R. 2691; H.R. 303; H.R. 1338; H.R. 1302; H.R. 2605; and H.R. 1384," Serial No. 144-28.


On July 9, 2015, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs met and marked up H.R. 2214 the Disabled Veterans’ Access to Medical Exams Improvement Act, introduced by Representative Ralph Abraham of Louisiana; H.R. 800, the Express Appeals Act, introduced by Representative Beto O’Rourke of Texas; H.R. 1379, to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Board of Veterans’ Appeals to develop evidence in appeal cases, and for other purposes, introduced by Representative Jeff Miller of Florida; H.R. 1380, to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand the eligibility for a medallion furnished by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to signify the veteran status of a deceased individual, introduced by Representative Jeff Miller of Florida; H.R. 2605, the Veterans Fiduciary Reform Act of 2015, introduced by Representative Bill Johnson of Ohio; H.R. 1302, the VA Appeals Backlog Relief Act, introduced by Representative Bob Latta of
Ohio; H.R. 1338, the Dignified Interment of Our Veterans Act of 2015, introduced by Representative Bill Shuster of Pennsylvania; H.R. 1384, the Honor America’s Guard-Reserve Retirees Act, introduced by Representative Timothy Walz of Minnesota; and H.R. 2691, the Veterans’ Survivors Claims Processing Automation Act of 2015, introduced by Representative Raul Ruiz of California were considered en bloc.

On July 9, 2015, an amendment to H.R. 2214 was offered by Representative Abraham of Louisiana and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 2214, as amended passed the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On July 9, 2015, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 800 was offered by Representative Dina Titus of Nevada and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 800, as amended passed the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On July 9, 2015, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1379 was offered by Representative Ralph Abraham of Louisiana and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 1379, as amended passed the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On July 9, 2015, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1380 was offered by Representative Ralph Abraham of Louisiana and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 1380, as amended passed the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On July 9, 2015, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 2605 was offered by Representative Ralph Abraham of Louisiana and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 2605, as amended passed the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On July 9, 2015, H.R. 1302 introduced by Representative Bob Latta of Ohio; H.R. 1338 introduced by Representative Bill Shuster of Pennsylvania; H.R. 1384 introduced by Representative Timothy Walz of Minnesota; and H.R. 2691 introduced by Representative Raul Ruiz of California were considered en bloc, passed the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote, and were favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

First Session

Subcommittee Hearing—Veterans’ Dilemma: Navigating the Appeals System for Veterans Claims

On January 22, 2015, the DAMA Subcommittee held a hearing to examine a veterans’ dilemma in having to navigate the appeals system for Veterans Claims.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Ms. Beth McCoy, Esquire, Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. McCoy was accompanied by Mr. Ronald S. Burke, Jr., Director, Appeals Management Center, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Ms. Laura H. Eskenazi, Es-
quire Executive-in-Charge and Vice Chairman, Board of Veterans’ Appeals, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Gerald T. Manar, Deputy Director, National Veterans Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Mr. Zachary Hearn, Deputy Director for Claims, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Ms. Diane Boyd Rauber, Esquire, Associate General Counsel for Appeals, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Mr. Paul R. Varela, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Mr. James R. Vale, Esquire, Director, Veterans Benefits Program, Vietnam Veterans of America.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Barton F. Stichman, Esquire, Joint Executive Director, National Veterans Legal Services Program; and Mr. Kenneth M. Carpenter, Esquire Founding Member, National Organization of Veterans’ Advocates. See “Veterans’ Dilemma: Navigating the Appeals System for Veterans Claims,” Serial No. 114–2.

Subcommittee Site Visit—Arlington, Virginia

On February 9, 2015, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs staffed DAMA Chairman Abraham during an operational update and tour of Arlington National Cemetery.

Subcommittee Roundtable Discussion—Exploration of the Impact of Character of Discharge

On February 13, 2015, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs participated in a roundtable discussion hosted by the Minority on the topic of those who were discharged from the military under other than honorable conditions. Members of the Subcommittee in attendance included Representatives Abraham, Benishek, Brownley, and Titus.

Subcommittee Site Visit—Bethesda, Maryland

On February 20, 2015, Majority and Minority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs participated in a staff delegation to tour Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. Additionally, staff received briefings regarding the Warrior Transition Unit, the Integrated Disability Evaluation System, the Inpatient Traumatic Brain Injury Program, and the NSAB Fisher Houses. Staff also received briefings on the Military Advanced Training Center, the John P. Murtha Cancer Center, and the National Intrepid Center of Excellence.

Subcommittee Roundtable Discussion—Impact of VA’S Backlog of Claims and Appeals on Wisconsin Veterans

On February 25, 2015, Majority and Minority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs assisted the Wisconsin delegation in the coordination of a bipartisan Member-level Roundtable discussion on the topic of the impact VA’s backlog of claims and appeals has had on Wisconsin veterans. In attendance included Wisconsin Representatives: Representative Sean Duffy, Representative Gwen Moore, Representative Jim Sensenbrenner, Representative Ron Kind, Representative Reid Ribble,
Representative Glenn Grothman, Representative Mark Pocan, Representative Paul Ryan, as well as Senator Tammy Baldwin. Mr. Danny Pummill, Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, was also in attendance.

Subcommittee Roundtable Discussion—Recommendations on Improvement of Veterans’ Disability Benefits and Pension Claims Appeals Within the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Judicial System

On March 4, 2015, Majority and Minority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs staffed a bipartisan roundtable discussion on the topic of veterans’ disability benefits appeals hosted by DAMA Chairman Abraham and DAMA Ranking Member Titus. Attendance included: Members of the Majority and Minority of the Subcommittee, Chief Judge Bruce Kasold, U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims; Professor Michael P. Allen, Stetson Law University College of Law; Mr. Louis J. Celli, Director, National Legislative Division, The American Legion; Mr. Joseph Moor, Bergmann and Moore; Ms. Carol W. Scott, Esq., Federal Bar Assoc., Veterans and Military Law Section; Mr. Matthew Hill, Esq., Hill & Ponton; Mr. Michael Viterna, President, National Organization of Veterans’ Advocates, Inc.; Mr. Ronald B. Abrams and Mr. Barton F. Stichman, Joint Executive Directors, National Veterans Legal Services Program; Mr. Blake Ortner, National Legislative Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Mr. Brendon Gehrke, Senior Legislative Associate, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Mr. John Rowan, National President, Vietnam Veterans of America; Ms. Amanda Meredith, Staff for the Senate Veterans Affairs Chairman; and Mr. Travis Murphy, Staff for the Senate Veterans Affairs Ranking Member; Brendon Gehrke, Veterans of Foreign Wars; John Rowan, Vietnam Veterans of America.

Subcommittee Site Visit—Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

On March 20, 2015, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted oversight and attended The American Legion briefing with the Director of the Philadelphia Regional Office.

Subcommittee Congressional Delegation—Fort Bliss, Texas

On March 29, 2015, through April 2, 2015, Majority and Minority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs accompanied Subcommittee Chairman Abraham to Fort Bliss, Texas, to conduct oversight of the Fort Bliss Integrated Disability Evaluation System and attend the Second Annual Army Trials. Chairman Abraham met with soldiers in the Warrior Transition Unit, service members engaged in the medical retirement/separation process via Integrated Disability Evaluation System, and other veterans. Chairman Abraham also received a briefing at the William Beaumont Army Medical Center, and received a tour of the facility. Additionally, Chairman Abraham received briefings, including a command briefing, and information on the installation’s capacities, capabilities, and deployment platform. While on site,
Chairman Abraham observed a Transition Assistance Program briefing.

**Subcommittee Site Visit—Arlington, Virginia**

On May 7, 2015, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs participated in a staff delegation to tour Arlington National Cemetery and Joint Base Myer Henderson Hall. The tour included the Arlington National Cemetery, an Old Guard briefing, a Caisson Barn tour, and a visit to the Army band.

**Subcommittee Hearing—Exploring VBA’s Fiduciary Program**

On June 11, 2015, the Subcommittee of Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a hearing to examine and assess the VBA’s Fiduciary Program.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Mr. David R. McLenachen, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Disability Assistance, Director, Pension and Fiduciary Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, who was accompanied by Mr. Michael R. Stephens Director, Indianapolis Regional Benefit Office Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, who was accompanied by Ms. Marcia Hempy, Acting Deputy Director, Pension and Fiduciary Service Manager, Columbia Fiduciary Hub, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Gary Abe, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Audits and Evaluations, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, who was accompanied by Mr. Quentin Aucoin Assistant Inspector General for Investigations, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, who was accompanied by Mr. Timothy Crowe, Director, St. Petersburg Office of Audits and Evaluations, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Zachary Hearn, Deputy Director for Claims, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Mr. Sam J. Albritton, III, Executive Vice President, Regions Bank; Mr. Douglas J. Rosinski, Attorney, Veterans Justice Group, LLC. See “Exploring VBA’s Fiduciary Program,” Serial No. 114–26.

**Subcommittee Roundtable Site Visit—Subcommittees on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs and Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Joint Oversight—Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

On June 15, 2015, Members and Majority and Minority staff of the Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs and the Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies held roundtable discussions at the Philadelphia Regional Office to discuss the state of the Philadelphia Regional Office. Members and staff met with VBA and Philadelphia Regional Office leadership and employees. Attendance included: Representative Ralph Abraham of Louisiana; Representative Sanford Bishop of Georgia; Representative Brady; Representative C. Brown; Representative Brendan Boyle of
Pennsylvania; Representative John Carney of Delaware; Representative Ryan Costello of Pennsylvania; Representative Charlie Dent of Pennsylvania; Representative Chaka Fattah of Pennsylvania; Representative Michael Fitzpatrick of Pennsylvania; Representative Patrick Meehan of Pennsylvania; Ms. Allison Hickey, Under Secretary for Benefits, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Linda Halliday, Assistant Inspect General for Audits and Evaluations, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Cathy Gromek, Congressional Relations Officer, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Nora Stokes, Director, Bay Pines Benefits Inspection Division, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Ron Arronte, Director, San Diego Benefits Inspections Division, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Regional Office Ms. Diana Rubens, Director, Philadelphia Regional Office; Regional Office; Ms. Carol Roane, Assistant Director, Philadelphia Regional Office; and Edward J. McQuade, Director, Togus Regional Office.

Subcommittee Site Visit—New Orleans, Louisiana

On June 28, 2015, through June 30, 2015, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs staffed Chairman Abraham on a visit to the New Orleans Regional Office. Additionally, staff conducted case file review of veterans’ claims.

Subcommittee Site Visit—Saint Petersburg, Florida

On June 30, 2015, to July 2, 2015, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted oversight and received briefings at the St. Petersburg Regional Office and the Bay Pines National Cemetery, in conjunction with Minority staff.

Subcommittee Site Visit—Chicago, Illinois

On August 2, 2015, to August 4, 2015, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted oversight and file review at the Chicago Regional Office.

Subcommittee Site Visit—Saint Louis, Missouri

On August 9, 2015, to August 11, 2015, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted oversight and received briefings at the St. Louis Regional Office, St. Louis Records Management Center, and the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery.

Subcommittee Site Visit—Pensacola, Florida

On August 11, 2015, to August 13, 2015, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted oversight and attended briefings at the Naval Air Station Pensacola and Eglin Air Base in conjunction with DAMA minority staff. Staff met with Wounded Warriors at Pensacola and Eglin. Staff toured the Naval Hospital Pensacola, Eglin Fisher House, Eglin Inpatient Multi-Service Unit/ICU, Eglin Explosive Ordnance Disposal School, McKinley Climatic Lab, and Eglin Petting Zoo.
Staff also attended a Naval Air Station Pensacola Command Brief, VA collaboration brief, Integrated Disability Evaluation System brief, Physical Medicine mission brief.

**Subcommittee Site Visit—Nashville, Tennessee**

On September 20, 2015, to September 24, 2015, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted oversight and file review at the Nashville Regional Office and National Call Center. Additionally staff conducted oversight of the Systematic Technical Accuracy Review facility to assess quality review operations.

**Subcommittee Site Visit—Florida**

On October 13, 2015, to October 16, 2015, Majority staff of the Subcommittees on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs and Oversight and Investigation conducted an oversight visit of the IDES program at the Army Reserve Medical Command at Pinellas Park, Florida. Staff also attended a MyVA Advisory Committee meeting in Tampa, Florida with Secretary McDonald, Deputy Secretary Gibson, Under Secretary for Benefits Hickey, and Under Secretary for Health Shulkin. Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs also conducted oversight and file review at the St. Petersburg Regional Office.

**Subcommittee Site Visit—North Carolina**

On November 9, 2015 to November 10, 2015, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted oversight and attended briefings at the Raleigh National Cemetery, the Fort Bragg Integrated Disability Evaluation System/Wounded Warrior Programs, and the Winston-Salem Regional Office.

**Subcommittee Site Visit—Baltimore, Maryland**

On November 18, 2015, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted oversight and observed Veterans Service Representative training at the Veterans Benefits Administration Training Academy at the Baltimore Regional Office.
Second Session

Subcommittee Hearing—Legislative Hearing on H.R. 3936; H.R. 4087; H.R. 4757; H.R. 4758; H.R. 4759; H.R. 4782; H.R. 3715; a Draft Bill Entitled “Medal of Honor Legacy Act;” a Draft Bill Entitled “Love Lives on Act of 2016;” a Draft Bill Entitled “To Amend Title 38, United States Code, To Improve the Consideration of Evidence by Board of Veterans’ Appeals;” and, a Draft Bill Entitled “To Amend Title 38, United States Code, to Pay Special Compensation to Certain Veterans With the Loss or Loss of Use of Creative Organs”

On April 13, 2016, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs met in open session and held a legislative hearing on the H.R. 3936, VET Act; H.R. 4087, Fair Treatment for Families of Veterans Act; H.R. 4757, To amend title 38, United States Code, to expand the eligibility for headstones, markers, and medallions furnished by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for deceased individuals who were awarded the Medal of Honor and are buried in private cemeteries; H.R. 4758, to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the award of the Presidential Memorial Certificate to certain deceased members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces and certain deceased members of the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps; H.R. 4759, To amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to pay costs relating to the transportation of certain deceased veterans to veterans’ cemeteries owned by a State or tribal organization; H.R. 4782, Veterans’ Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2016; H.R. 3715, Final Farewell Act of 2016; a draft bill entitled “To amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the consideration of evidence by Board of Veterans’ Appeals;” and, a draft bill entitled “To amend title 38, United States Code, to pay special compensation to certain veterans with the loss or loss of use of creative organs.” On the first panel, testimony was provided by the Honorable Jeff Miller, U.S. House of Representatives, 1st Congressional District, Florida; the Honorable Corrine Brown, 5th Congressional District, Florida; the Honorable Ryan Costello, U.S. House of Representatives, 6th Congressional District, Pennsylvania; and the Honorable Mia Love, U.S. House of Representatives, 4th Congressional District, Utah.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. David R. McLenachen, Deputy Under Secretary for Disability Assistance with the Veterans Benefits Administration at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. McLenachen was accompanied by Mr. Matt Sullivan, Deputy Under Secretary of Finance and Planned and CFO with the National Cemetery Administration with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. Patrick K. Hallinan, Executive Director with the Army National Military Cemeteries at the Department of the Army also provided testimony.
On the third panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Carl Blake, Associate Executive Director for Government Relations for the Paralyzed Veterans of America; Mr. Aleks Morosky, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Mr. Paul R. Varela, Assistant National Legislative Director for the Disabled American Veterans; Ms. Elizabeth Davis, Advocate for Survivors’ Benefits; and Mr. Edward G. Lilley, Team Leader for the Health Policy, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division for the American Legion.

A statement for the record was proved by Mr. John Rowan, National President of Vietnam Veterans of America. See, Legislative Hearing on H.R. 3936; H.R. 4087; H.R. 4757; H.R. 4758; H.R. 4759; H.R. 4782; H.R. 3715; a draft bill entitled “Medal of Honor Legacy Act;” a draft bill entitled “Love Lives On Act of 2016;” a draft bill entitled “To amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the consideration of evidence by Board of Veterans’ Appeals;” and, a draft bill entitled “To amend title 38, United States Code, to pay special compensation to certain veterans with the loss or loss of use of creative organs.” Serial No. 114–62.

Subcommittee Markup of H.R. 4892; H.R. 3715; H.R. 4758; H.R. 4087; H.R. 4759; H.R. 4782; H.R. 4757; and H.R. 3936

On May 11, 2016, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs met in open session to markup up H.R. 4757, the “To amend title 38, United States Code, to expand the eligibility for headstones, markers, and medallions furnished by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for deceased individuals who were awarded the Medal of Honor and are buried in private cemeteries,” introduced by Chairman Miller of Florida; H.R. 4758, “To amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the award of the Presidential Memorial Certificate to certain deceased members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces and certain deceased members of the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps,” introduced by Chairman Miller of Florida; H.R. 4759, “To amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to pay costs relating to the transportation of certain deceased veterans to veterans’ cemeteries owned by a State or tribal organization,” introduced by Chairman Miller of Florida; H.R. 3936, the “Veterans Access to Care Act,” introduced by Rep. Ryan Costello of Pennsylvania; H.R. 4892, “To amend title 38, United States Code, to pay special compensation to certain veterans with the loss or loss of use of creative organs,” introduced by Chairman Miller of Florida; H.R. 4782, the “Veterans’ Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2016,” introduced by Rep. Abraham of Louisiana; H.R. 4087, “Fair Treatment for Families of Veterans Act,” introduced by Rep. Love of Utah; and H.R. 3715, the “Final Farewell Act of 2015”, introduced by Rep. Brown of Florida.

On May 11, 2016 an A.N.S. to H.R. 4757 was offered by Rep. Titus of Nevada and was agreed to by the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 4757, as amended to the Full Committee was offered by Ranking Member Titus and was adopted by the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote.

On May 11, 2016 an A.N.S. to H.R. 4758 was offered by Rep. Abraham of Louisiana agreed to by the DAMA Subcommittee by
voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 4758, as amended to the Full Committee was offered by Ranking Member Titus and was adopted by the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote.

On May 11, 2016 an A.N.S. to H.R. 4759 was offered by Rep. Abraham of Louisiana and agreed to by the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 4759, as amended to the Full Committee was offered by Ranking Member Titus and was adopted by the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote.

On May 11, 2016 H.R. 3936 passed the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 3936 to the Full Committee was offered by Ranking Member Titus and was adopted by the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote.

On May 11, 2016 an A.N.S. to H.R. 4892 was offered by Rep. Abraham of Louisiana and substitute for the A.N.S. to H.R. 4892 was offered by Rep. Titus of Nevada. The substitute for the A.N.S. to H.R. 4892 offered by Rep. Titus not adopted by the DAMA Subcommittee by a recorded vote of 5 noes; 2 yeas, and 1 Member not voting. A substitute for the A.N.S. to H.R. 4892 was offered by Rep. Ruiz on behalf of Rep. Brownley of California. The substitute for the A.N.S. to H.R. 4892 offered by Rep. Brownley was adopted by the DAMA Subcommittee by a recorded vote of 5 noes; 2 yeas, and 1 Member not voting. The A.N.S. to H.R. 4892 offered by Rep. Abraham was adopted by the DAMA subcommittee by a recorded vote of 6 yes, 1 no and 1 Member not voting. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 4892, as amended to the Full Committee was offered by Rep. Lamborn and was adopted by the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote.

On May 11, 2016, an A.N.S. to H.R. 4782 was offered by Rep. Titus of Nevada and was not agreed to by the DAMA Subcommittee by a recorded vote of 4 noes; 3 yeas; and 1 Member not voting. H.R. 4782, passed the DAMA Subcommittee by recorded vote of 7 yeas and 0 noes. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 4782 to the Full Committee was offered by Rep. Lamborn and was adopted by the DAMA Subcommittee via voice vote.

On May 11, 2016, an A.N.S. to H.R. 4087 was offered by Rep. Abraham of Louisiana; an amendment to the A.N.S. to H.R. 4087 was offered by Rep. Titus of Nevada; and an amendment to the A.N.S. to H.R. 4087 was offered by Rep. Brownley of California. The amendment to the A.N.S. offered by Rep. Titus to H.R. 4087 was not adopted by the DAMA Subcommittee by a recorded vote of 5 noes and 3 yeas. The amendment to the A.N.S. offered by Rep. Brownley to H.R. 4087 was adopted by the DAMA Subcommittee via voice vote. The A.N.S. to H.R. 4087, as amended, was adopted by the DAMA subcommittee via voice vote. H.R. 4087, as amended, was adopted by the DAMA Subcommittee via voice vote and a motion to favorably forward H.R. 4087, as amended to the Full Committee was offered by Rep. Lamborn and was adopted by the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote. On May 11, 2016 an A.N.S. to H.R. 3715 was offered by Rep. Titus of Nevada agreed to by the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 3715, as amended to the Full Committee was offered by Ranking Member Titus and was adopted by the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote.
OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

Second Session

The American Legion Washington Conference—Washington, DC
On February 18, 2016, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs attended Department Service Officer training.

Subcommittee Site Visit—Newnan, Georgia
On February 26, 2016, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted an oversight visit at the CACI scanning facility in Newnan, Georgia.

Subcommittee Site Visit—Cleveland, Ohio
On March 7, 2016, to March 10, 2016, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted oversight and file review at the Chicago regional office.

National Organization of Veterans’ Advocates (NOVA) Conference—Las Vegas, Nevada
On March 11, 2016, to March 12, 2016, Majority and Minority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs participated in the NOVA Conference. Staff attended several workshops for veterans’ legal advocates, including a discussion conducted by the Honorable Judge Alan G. Lance, Sr., on practicing before the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims and an update from VA conducted by Department of Veterans Affairs Program Analyst Allison Blaisdell and Chief, Veterans Claims Examiner Jacqueline Imboden.

Subcommittee Hearing—Twenty-Five Years After the Persian Gulf War: An Assessment of Veterans Affairs’ Disability Claim Process with Respect to Gulf War Illness
On March 15, 2016, the Subcommittees on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs and Oversight and Investigations met in open session and held an oversight hearing to examine the Department of Veterans Affairs handling of disability claims filed by Persian Gulf War veterans. On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Zachary Hearn, Deputy Director for Claims, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Mr. Aleksandr Morosky, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Mr. Rick Weidman, Executive Director for Policy and Government Affairs, Vietnam Veterans of America; Mr. Richard V. Spataro, Director of Training and Publications, National Veterans Legal Services Program; and, Mr. David R. McLenachen, Deputy Under Secretary for Disability Assistance, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. McLenachen was accompanied by Mr. Bradley Flohr, Senior Advisor, Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “Twenty-Five Years After the Persian Gulf War: An Assessment of Veterans Affairs’ Disability Claim Process with Respect to Gulf War Illness,” Serial No. 114–59.
Appeals Working Group—Department of Veterans Affairs—Washington, DC

In March 2016, Majority and Minority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs attended several sessions of the Appeals Working Group, which focused on reforming VA's appeals process. Participants included representatives from the following organizations: the Department of Veterans Affairs; The American Legion; AMVETS; Disabled American Veterans; Military Officers Association of America; National Association of County Veteran Service Officers; National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs; National Organization of Veterans Advocates; National Veterans Legal Services Program; Paralyzed Veterans of America; Veterans of Foreign Wars; and, Vietnam Veterans of America.

Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims—Washington, DC

On March 29, 2016, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs observed the oral arguments in the case of Robinson v. McDonald.

Thirteenth Judicial Conference of the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims—Washington, DC

On April 14, 2016, to April 15, 2016, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs attended the Judicial Conference of the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. Staff attended several sessions including Exams, DBQs & Opinions: Comparing Views moderated by Douglas Rosinski, Attorney, Office of Douglas J. Rosinski; and panelists: Alan Dinesman, M.D., Office of Disability and Medical Assessment, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; Leticia Flores, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Tennessee; and Bradley Hennings, Board Member, Board of Veterans’ Appeals, Department of Veterans Affairs. Additionally, staff attended remarks from Robert A. McDonald, Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs.

Subcommittee Hearing—Investigating VA's Management of Veterans’ Paper Records

On June 15, 2016, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs met in open session and held an oversight hearing to examine the Department of Veterans Affairs handling of paper records. On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Ms. Beth McCoy, Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Brent Arronte, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Audits and Evaluations, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Ms. McCoy was accompanied by Mr. Brad Houston, Director, Office of Business Process, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. Arronte was accompanied by Ms. Dana Sullivan, Director, San Diego Benefits Inspection Division, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “Investigating VA’s Management of Veterans’ Paper Records,” Serial No. 114–72.
Subcommittee Roundtable Site Visit—Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs—Rayville, Louisiana

On June 20, 2016, the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs hosted a roundtable to discuss the criteria used to award federal grants to help establish state veterans cemeteries. Attendees included: Rep. Abraham; Rep. Benishek; Mr. George D. Eisenbach, Director, Veterans Cemetery Grants Program, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Howard Orr, Landscape Architect, NCA Cemetery Grants Program, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Homer Rodgers, Undersecretary, Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Billy Robbins, Director, State Cemeteries Division, Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Tim Johnson, Director, Northeast Louisiana Veterans Cemetery; and, Mr. Scott Franklin, representative of the Franklin family. Majority and Minority staff of the subcommittee provided support to Chairman Abraham and invited participants.

Subcommittee Hearing—TBI Claims: VA’s Failure To Provide Adequate Examinations

On July 13, 2016, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs met in open session and held an oversight hearing on VA’s failure to provide adequate examinations for traumatic brain injury claims. On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Dave McLenachen, Deputy Under Secretary for Disability Assistance, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. McLenachen was accompanied by Ms. Patricia Murray, Chief Officer, Office of Disability and Medical Assessment, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and, Ms. Mary Glenn, Acting Deputy Director, Operations, Compensations Services, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “TBI Claims: VA’s Failure to Provide Adequate Examinations,” Serial No. 114–76.

Appeals Management Center Site Visit—Washington, DC

On July 26, 2016, Majority and Minority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted an oversight visit of the Appeals Management Center.

Subcommittee Site Visit—St. Paul, Minnesota

On August 16, 2016, to August 19, 2016, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted oversight and file review at the Chicago regional office.

Honor Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery—Arlington, VA

On August 23, 2016, Majority and Minority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs observed the Honor Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery meeting which discussed the P.L. 114–158 requirement that the Secretary of the Army submit a report to Congress on the current capacity of Arlington National Cemetery and make recommendations for legislative actions and nonlegislative
options the Secretary of the Army considers appropriate to extend
the life of the cemetery well into the future.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

First Session

Subcommittee Hearing—Legislative Hearing on H.R. 456;
H.R. 473; H.R. 474; H.R. 475; H.R. 476; H.R. 643; H.R. 1038;
H.R. 1141; H.R. 1187; H.R. 1313; H.R. 1382

On March 24, 2015 the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity
met in open session and held a legislative hearing on H.R. 456, Re-
ducing Barriers for Veterans Education Act of 2015; H.R. 473, In-
creasing the Department of Veterans Affairs Accountability to Vet-
erans Act of 2015; H.R. 474, Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Pro-
grams Reauthorization Act of 2015; H.R. 475, GI Bill Processing
Improvement Act of 2015; H.R. 476, GI Bill Education Quality En-
hancement Act of 2015; H.R. 643, Veterans Education Survey Act
of 2015; H.R.1038, Ensuring VA Employee Accountability Act; H.R.
1141, GI Bill Fairness Act of 2015; H.R. 1187, To amend title 38,
United States Code, to adjust certain limits on the guaranteed
amount of a home loan under the home loan program of the De-
partment of Veterans Affairs; H.R. 1313, Service Disabled Veteran
Owned Small Business Relief Act; H.R. 1382, Boosting Rates of

On the first panel, testimony was provided by the Honorable Pat-
rick Murphy, U.S. House of Representatives, 18th Congressional
District, Florida.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Aleks
Morosky, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans
of Foreign Wars of the United States; Mr. Christopher Neiweem,
Legislative Associate, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America;
Mr. Steve Gonzalez, Assistant Director, National Veteran Employ-
ment & Education Division, The American Legion; Dr. Joseph W.
Wescott, President, National Association of State Approving Agen-
cies.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by MG Robert M.
Worley II USAF (Ret.), Director, Education Service, Veterans Ben-
efit Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accomp-
panied by: Mr. Tom Leney, Executive Director, Small and Veteran
Business Programs, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accomp-
panied by: Ms. Kimberly McLeod, Deputy Assistant General Coun-
sel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompained by: Mr.
John Brizzi, Deputy Assistant General Counsel, U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Teresa W. Gerton, Deputy Assistant Sec-
retary, Veterans’ Employment and Training Service, U.S. Depart-
ment of Labor. See “Legislative Hearing on H.R. 456; H.R.473; H.R.
474; H.R. 475; H.R. 476; H.R. 643; H.R. 1038; H.R. 1141; H.R.
1187; H.R. 1313; H.R. 1382” Serial No. 114–12.


On April 15, 2015, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 473 was offered by Rep. Brad Wenstrup of Ohio and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 473, as amended passed the EO Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On April 15, 2015, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 475 was offered by Rep. Brad Wenstrup of Ohio and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 475, as amended passed the EO Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On April 15, 2015, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 476 was offered by Rep. Mark Takano of California. The amendment to the A.N.S. to H.R. 476 was voted on by a recorded vote and was not adopted by the EO Subcommittee with a roll call vote of 4 yeas to 4 nays. The A.N.S. to H.R. 476 offered by Rep. Wenstrup was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 476, as amended passed the EO Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

Subcommittee Hearing—Legislative Hearing on H.R. 356; H.R. 832; H.R. 1994; H.R. 2133; H.R. 2275; H.R. 2344; H.R. 2360; H.R. 2361; and a Draft Bill Entitled, “To Amend Title 38, United States Code, To Make Certain Modifications and Improvements in the Transfer of Unused Educational Assistance Benefits Under the Post 9/11 Educational Assistance Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for Other Purposes.”


On the first panel, testimony was provided by The Honorable Bill Flores, U.S. House of Representatives, 17th Congressional District, Texas; The Honorable Paul Cook, U.S. House of Representatives, 8th Congressional District, California; The Honorable Sean Patrick Maloney, U.S. House of Representatives, 18th Congressional District, New York.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Paul R. Varela Assistant National Legislative Director Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Brendon Gehrke Senior Legislative Associate National Legislative Service Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Mr. Steve Gonzalez Assistant Director Veterans Employment and Education Division The American Legion; Mr. David Borger General Counsel American Federation of Government Employees, AFL–CIO; Mr. Christopher Neiweem Legislative Associate Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; Mr. Rick Weidman Executive Director Government Affairs Vietnam Veterans of America.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Curtis L. Coy Deputy Under Secretary for Economic Opportunity Veterans Benefits Administration U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Ms. Cathy Mitrano Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Resource Management Human Resources and Administration U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Teresa W. Gerton Acting Assistant Secretary Veterans' Employment and Training Service U.S. Department of Labor; Dr. Susan S. Kelly Director Transition to Veterans Program Office Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness U.S. Department of Defense. See “Legislative Hearing on H.R. 356; H.R. 832; H.R. 1994; H.R. 2133; H.R. 2275; H.R. 2344; H.R. 2360; H.R. 2361; and a draft bill entitled, ‘To amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain modifications and improvements in the transfer of unused educational assistance benefits under the Post 9/11 Edu-
cational Assistance Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.75 Serial No. 114–23.

Subcommittee Markup of H.R. 1994; H.R. 2344; H.R. 2360; H.R. 356; H.R. 832; H.R. 2275; and H.R. 2361


On June 25, 2015, an Amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1994 was offered by Rep. Brad Wenstrup of Ohio and was voted on by a recorded vote with 5 yeas to 4 nays, and was adopted by the EO Subcommittee. A Substitute to the Amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1994 was offered by Rep. Mark Takano of California and was voted on by a recorded vote with 5 nays to 4 yeas, and was not adopted by the EO Subcommittee. An Amendment to the Amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1994 was offered by Rep. Kathleen Rice of New York and was voted on by a recorded vote with 5 nays to 4 yeas, and was not adopted by the EO Subcommittee. H.R. 1994, as amended passed the EO Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On June 25, 2015, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 2344 was offered by Rep. Brad Wenstrup of Ohio and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 2344, as amended passed the EO Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On June 25, 2015, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 42360 was offered by Rep. Mark Takano of California and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 2360, as amended passed the EO Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On June 25, 2015, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 832 was offered by Rep. Mark Takano of California and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 832, as amended passed the EO Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On June 25, 2015, the bills were considered en bloc (H.R. 356, introduced by Rep. Maloney, New York; H.R. 832, introduced by Rep. Cook, California; H.R. 2275, introduced by Rep. Miller, Florida; H.R. 2361, introduced by Rep. Takano, California) passed the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee by voice vote and were favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.
OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

First Session

Subcommittee Hearing—A Review of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP)

On January 27, 2015 the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session and held a hearing to examine and review the Transition Assistance Program.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Davy Leghorn, Assistant Director The Veteran Education and Employment Commission, The American Legion; Mr. Ryan M. Gallucci, Deputy Director National Veterans Service Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Ms. Valrica Marshall Dunmyer, Chief of Staff and Chief Financial Officer Student Veterans of America; Colonel David W. Sutherland, U.S. Army (Ret.) Chairman and Co-Founder Easter Seals Dixon Center.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Curtis L. Coy, Deputy Under Secretary for Economic Opportunity Veterans Benefits Administration U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Teresa W. Gerton, Deputy Assistant Secretary Veterans' Employment and Training Service U.S. Department of Labor; Dr. Susan Kelly, Director Transition to Veterans Program Office, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Department of Defense. See “A Review of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP),” Serial No. 114–4.

Subcommittee Hearing—A Review of the President’s Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Request for the Department of Labor’s Veteran Employment and Training Service (VETS)

On February 12, 2015, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session and held a hearing to review and examine the President’s Fiscal Year 2016 Budget request for the Department of Labor’s veteran employment and training services.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Ms. Teresa W. Gerton, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Veterans’ Employment and Training Service, U.S. Department of Labor.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Davy G. Leghorn, Assistant Director, The Veteran Education and Employment Commission, The American Legion; Mr. Rick Weidman, Executive Director, Government Affairs, Vietnam Veterans of America; Mr. Paul R. Varela, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans. See “A Review of the President’s Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Request for the Department of Labor’s Veteran Employment and Training Service (VETS),” Serial No. 114–8.

Subcommittee Hearing—A Review of Higher Education Opportunities for the Newest Generation of Veterans

On March 17, 2015, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session and held a hearing to assess and review the higher education opportunities for the newest generation of veterans.
On the first panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Terence Harrison, Manager, Veterans Programs and Services, The University of Cincinnati; Mr. Raymond C. Kelley, Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Mr. Christopher Neiweem, Legislative Associate, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; Mr. Marc A. Barker, President, National Association of Veterans’ Program Administrators; Trustee William Withrow, Board of Trustees, Peralta Community College District.


Subcommittee Site Visit—Louisville, KY

On March 30, 2015–April 3, 2015, the Staff Director and the Legislative Aide of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity travelled to Louisville, KY to attend a Transition Assistance Program (TAP) training course hosted by the United States Army and the Army’s Soldier for Life program. The purpose of attending the course was to learn what the Army is doing to properly transition their servicemembers out of active duty service into the civilian world. They also had the opportunity to speak with various individuals who administer TAP classes worldwide and receive feedback on how to improve the program for future transitioning servicemembers. Staff from HVAC Minority and SVAC Majority and Minority also attended the site visit and TAP course.

Subcommittee Roundtable Discussion—To Review the Recommendations Made in the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission

On April 22, 2015, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity hosted a bi-partisan roundtable discussion to discuss the recommendations made regarding the G.I. Bill in the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission’s final report. Members of the subcommittee attended the roundtable, as did the following: The Honorable Alphonso Maldon, Jr., Chairman, Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission; Senator Larry Pressler, Commissioner, Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission; Congressman Steve Buyer, Commissioner, Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission; Congressman Christopher Carney, Commissioner, Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission; Congressman Michael Higgins, Commissioner, Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission; Dr. Dov Zakheim, Commissioner, Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission; Mr. Steve Gonzalez, Assistant Director, National Veteran Employment & Education Division, The American Legion; Mr. Brendon Gehrke, Senior Legislative Associate, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Mr. Walter Tillman, Director of Programs, Student Veterans of America; Mr. Shaun Rieley, Outreach and Research Analyst, Concerned Veterans for America; Ms. Susan Lucas, Legislative Director, Reserve Officers Association; Mr. Chris Neiweem, Legislative Associate, Iraq and Afghanistan
Veterans of America; and Mr. Rick Weidman, Executive Director, Government Affairs, Vietnam Veterans of America.

Subcommittee Roundtable Discussion—Issues With the Cap on Flight Schools for G.I. Bill Funding

On May 8, 2015, the Staff Director for the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity attended an informal roundtable in Washington, D.C. at the headquarters for the Helicopter Association International (HAI). The roundtable was an opportunity for various flight and helicopter schools who belong to HAI to voice their concerns with placing a cap on flight school training for G.I. Bill benefits that was included in H.R. 476, introduced by Rep. Brad Wenstrup (R–OH) and later was included in H.R. 3016 and passed out of the Committee. The Staff Director of the Subcommittee spoke with the attendees and discussed alternative caps on flight training programs, as well as provided an update on the bill and where it would move going forward.

Subcommittee Hearing—A Review of VA’s Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program

On July 8, 2015, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session and held a hearing to assess and review the VA’s vocational rehabilitation and employment program.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Paul R. Varela, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Ms. Heather Ansley, Associate General Counsel for Corporate and Government Relations, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Mr. Ross A. Meglathery, MPA, Director of VetsFirst, United Spinal Association.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Jack Kammerer, Director, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Ralph Charlip, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Operations and Management, Veterans’ Employment and Training Service, U.S. Department Of Labor. See “A Review of VA’s Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program,” Serial No. 114–30.

Subcommittee Site Visit—Indianapolis, IN

On August 18, 2015, the Staff Director for the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity travelled to Indianapolis, IN to conduct oversight of VA’s education programs and to participate on the legislative panel at the National Association of State Approving Agencies’ (NASAA) annual conference.


On September 10, 2015, the Staff Director for the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity attended a roundtable discussion in Washington D.C. with the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Veterans and Military Families Task Force. The roundtable was an opportunity to discuss issues and legislation relating to veterans’ employment, VR&E, and adaptive housing. Veterans groups at-
tended the roundtable as well as other stakeholders in the veterans
community who deal with employment and transition issues for
veterans.

Subcommittee Hearing—A Review of Licensing and
Credentialing Standards for Servicemembers and Vet-
ers: Do Barriers Still Remain?

On September 10, 2015, the Subcommittee on Economic Oppor-
tunity met in open session and held a hearing to examine and re-
view the licensing and credentialing standards for servicemembers
and veterans, determining whether barriers still remain.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Steve Gon-
zalez, Assistant Director National Veterans Employment & Edu-
cation Division, The American Legion; Dr. Roy Swift, Executive Di-
rector Workcred, an affiliate of the American National Standards
Institute (ANSI); Mr. Jamie P. Merisotis, President Lumina Found-
dation; Ms. Denise Roosendaal, Executive Director Institute for
Credentialing Excellence (ICE).

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Ms. Teresa W.
Gerton, Acting Assistant Secretary Veterans’ Employment and
Training Service, U.S. Department of Labor; Mr. Frank C.
DiGiovanni, Director Force Readiness and Training, U.S. Depart-
ment of Defense; Mr. David Quam, Deputy Director, Policy Na-
tional Governors Association. See “A Review of Licensing and
Credentialing Standards for Servicemembers and Veterans: Do

Subcommittee Roundtable Discussion—Advisory Committee
on Education

On October 21, 2015, the Staff Director for the Subcommittee on
Economic Opportunity, attended a roundtable discussion in Wash-
ington, D.C. with the Advisory Committee on Education and pro-
vided an update to the attendees on current legislation that would
make improvements to the GI Bill and other education assistance
programs administered by VA. The Staff Director of the Sub-
committee was accompanied at the roundtable by staff from SVAC
Majority.

Subcommittee Hearing—A Review of VA’s VetSuccess on
Campus Program

On October 22, 2015, the Subcommittee on Economic Oppor-
tunity met in open session and held a hearing to examine and re-
view the VA's VetSuccess on campus program.

On the first panel testimony was provided by Mr. Terence Har-
arrison, Manager Veterans Programs and Services, University of Cin-
cinnati; Dr. Lawrence A. Braue, LTC (USA, Ret.), Director Office
of Veterans Services, University of South Florida; Mr. William
Hubbard, Vice President of Government Affairs, Student Veterans
of America; Mr. Ryan Kaufman, Nebraska Veteran Team Leader,
Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Jack
Kammerer, Director Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment
Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Vet-
Subcommittee Hearing—Examining VA’s Information Technology Systems that Provide Economic Opportunities for Veterans

On November 3, 2015, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session and held a hearing to examine the economic opportunities for veterans from the VA’s information technology systems.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Davy Leghorn, Assistant Director, National Veterans Employment & Education Division, The American Legion; Mr. William Hubbard, Vice President of Government Affairs, Student Veterans of America.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Curtis L. Coy Deputy Under Secretary for Economic Opportunity Veterans Benefits Administration U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Mr. Jack Kammerer Director, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: MG Robert M. Worley II USAF (Ret.), Director, Education Service Veterans Benefit Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Mr. Steven Schliesman, Assistant Deputy Chief Information Officer, Office of Information & Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See “Examining VA’s Information Technology Systems that Provide Economic Opportunities for Veterans,” Serial No. 114–42.

Subcommittee Roundtable Discussion—Advisory Committee on Readjustment for Veterans

On November 6, 2015, the Staff Director for the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity attended a roundtable discussion in Washington, D.C. with the Advisory Committee on Readjustment for Veterans. The discussion was focused around programs to assist transitioning servicemembers readjust from active duty military life to the civilian sector. The Staff Director of the Subcommittee was accompanied at the roundtable by staff from HVAC Minority and staff from SVAC Majority and Minority staff.

Subcommittee Hearing—Examining VA’s On-The-Job Training and Apprenticeship Program

On November 18, 2015, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session to conduct a hearing reviewing the on-the-job training and apprenticeship program.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Andrew Sherrill, Director Education, Workforce, and Income Security, U.S. Government Accountability Office; Dr. Joseph W. Wescott, Legislative Director, National Association of State Approving Agencies; MG Robert M. Worley II USAF (Ret.), Director, Education Service Veterans Benefit Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Eric Seleznow, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor. See “Examining VA’s On-The-Job Training and Apprenticeship Program,” Serial No. 114–46.
Subcommittee Roundtable Discussion—Assessing How To Improve Recruitment, Retention, and Hiring Practices Across VA

On December 2, 2015, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity attended and hosted a roundtable discussion, along with Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Health, entitled, “Assessing How to Improve Recruitment, Retention, and Hiring Practices across VA.” Those who attended the roundtable discussion included: Samuel B. Retherford, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Human Resources and Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Melody Mikutowski, Acting Chief Consultant, Office of Human Resources Management, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Denni Woodmansee, Director of Physician Assistant Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Marilyn Park, Legislative Representative, American Federation of Government Employees; Mike Rosenblatt, Legislative Representative, American Federation of Government Employees; Max Stier, President and Chief Executive Officer, Partnership for Public Service; Kristine Simmons, Vice President of Government Affairs, Partnership for Public Service; Samuel Spagnolo M.D., President, National Association of VA Physicians and Dentists; Scot Burroughs, Board Member, Veterans Affairs Physician Assistant Association; Larry Lemos, President, Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs; Travis Singleton, Senior Vice President, Merritt Hawkins; Sean Ebner, President, Staff Care; Ed Lilley, Team Leader for Health Policy, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Matt Shuman, Assistant Director, Legislative Division, The American Legion; Sarah Dean, Associate Legislative Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Carlos Fuentes, Senior Legislative Associate, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Rick Weidman, Executive Director for Policy and Government Affairs, Vietnam Veterans of America.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

Second Session

Joint Legislative Hearing—Legislative Hearing on Draft Legislation To Improve the Authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs To Hire and Retain Physicians and Other Employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs

On Wednesday, March, 16, 2016, the Subcommittee on Health and the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity conducted, in open session, a legislative hearing on draft legislation to improve the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire and retain physicians and other employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Max Stier, President and Chief Executive Officer, on behalf of Partnership for Public Service; Roscoe G. Butler, Deputy Director of Health Care, Na-
tional Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, on behalf of The American Legion; Carlos Fuentes, Senior Legislative Associate, on behalf of Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Carolyn Clancy M.D., Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Organizational Excellence, Veterans Health Administration, on behalf of U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Dr. Clancy was accompanied by Elias Hernandez, Chief Officer, Workforce Management and Consulting, Veterans Health Administration, on behalf of U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “Legislative Hearing on draft legislation to improve the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire and retain physicians and other employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs,” Serial No. 114–60.

Subcommittee Hearing—Legislative Hearing on H.R. 748; H.R. 2551; H.R. 3286; H.R. 3419; H.R. 4138; A Draft Bill Entitled, “To Make Certain Improvements in the Laws Administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs Relating to Educational Assistance, and for Other Purposes;” A Draft Bill Entitled, the “Veterans Success on Campus Act of 2016;” A Draft Bill Entitled, the “GI Bill Oversight Act of 2016;” and a Draft Bill Entitled, “To Direct the Secretary of Labor to Carry Out a Research Program to Evaluate the Effectiveness of Transition Assistance Program in Addressing Needs of Certain Minority Veterans.”

On April 14, 2016, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session and held a legislative hearing on the H.R. 748, GI Bill STEM Extension Act of 2015; H.R. 2551, Veterans’ Entry to Apprenticeship Act; H.R. 3286, Veterans’ Entry to Apprenticeship Act; H.R. 3419, Support for Student Veterans with Families Act; H.R. 4138, To authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to recoup relocation expenses paid to or on behalf of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs; a draft bill entitled, “To make certain improvements in the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs relating to educational assistance, and for other purposes;” a draft bill entitled, the “Veterans Success on Campus Act of 2016;” a draft bill entitled, the “GI Bill Oversight Act of 2016;” and a draft bill entitled, “To direct the Secretary of Labor to carry out a research program to evaluate the effectiveness of Transition Assistance Program in addressing needs of certain minority veterans.”

On the first panel, testimony was provided by the Honorable David McKinley, U.S. House of Representatives, 1st Congressional District, West Virginia; the Honorable Paul Cook U.S. House of Representatives, 8th Congressional District, California, and the Honorable Martha McSally, U.S. House of Representatives, 2nd Congressional District, Arizona.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Curtis L. Coy, Deputy Under Secretary for Economic Opportunity with the Veterans Benefits Administration at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. Coy was accompanied by Ms. Carin Otero, Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for HR Policy and Planning in the Office of Human Resources and Administration at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. Sam Shellenberger, Deputy Assistant
Secretary for Operations with the Veterans’ Employment and Training Service at the U.S. Department of Labor also provided testimony.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Davy Leghorn, Assistant Director, Veterans Employment and Education Division, The American Legion; Dr. Joseph W. Wescott, Legislative Director at the National Association of State Approving Agencies; Mr. Walter Ochinko, Policy Director with the Veterans Education Success; Mr. Jared Lyon, President & CEO with Student Veterans of America; and Mr. Aleks Morosky, Deputy Director of National Legislative Service for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

A statement for the record was provided by Office of Inspector General at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See Legislative Hearing on H.R. 748; H.R. 2551; H.R. 3286; H.R. 3419; H.R. 4138; a draft bill entitled, “To make certain improvements in the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs relating to educational assistance, and for other purposes;” a draft bill entitled, the “Veterans Success on Campus Act of 2016;” a draft bill entitled, the “GI Bill Oversight Act of 2016;” and a draft bill entitled, “To direct the Secretary of Labor to carry out a research program to evaluate the effectiveness of Transition Assistance Program in addressing needs of certain minority veterans.” Serial No. 114–64.

Subcommittee Markup of H.R. 3286; H.R. 4138; H.R. 5174; H.R. 5175; H.R. 5176; and H.R. 5178


On May 11, 2016 an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R.3286 was offered by Rep. Wenstrup of Ohio. The amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to by the EO Subcommittee by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 3286, as amended to the Full Committee was offered by Ranking Member Takano of California and was adopted by the EO Subcommittee by voice vote.

On May 11, 2016 H.R. 4138 passed the EO Subcommittee by a recorded vote of 5 yeas to 3 noes. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 4138 to the Full Committee was offered by Rep. Zeldin of New York and was adopted by the EO Subcommittee by a voice vote.

On May 11, 2016 an amendment to H.R.5174 was offered by Rep. Takano of California; The amendment was not agreed to by the EO Subcommittee by voice vote; an additional amendment to H.R. 5174, was offered by Rep. Takano of California; the amendment
was agreed to by the EO Subcommittee by voice vote; a motion to favorably forward H.R. 5174, as amended to the Full Committee was offered by Ranking Member Takano of California and was adopted by the EO Subcommittee by voice vote.

On May 11, 2016, H.R. 5175 and H.R. 5178 were considered by the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity en bloc. Both H.R. 5175 and H.R. 5178 passed the EO Subcommittee by voice vote and a motion to favorably forward H.R. 5175; and H.R. 5178 to the Full Committee was offered by Ranking Member Takano of California and were adopted by the EO Subcommittee by voice vote.

OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

Second Session

Subcommittee Site Visit—Orlando, FL

On January 9–10, 2016, Staff Director of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity travelled to Orlando, FL with the Chairman to attend the Student Veterans of America annual conference and conduct oversight of VA’s administration of education benefits.

Subcommittee Hearing—Finding Solutions FOR Veteran Homelessness in Southern California

On January 20, 2016 the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session and held an oversight field hearing at the Riverside Community College in Riverside, CA to discuss solutions for veterans’ homelessness in Southern California.

Testimony was provided by Mr. Emilio Ramirez, Development Director, City of Riverside; Ms. Carrie Harmon, Principal Development Specialist, County of Riverside; Mr. Stephen Peck, President & CEO, U.S.VETS; Mr. Son Nguyen Co-founder & President, Veterans Association of Real Estate Professionals; and Mr. Jose Rivera, Student of the University of California, Riverside. See “Finding Solutions for Veteran Homelessness in Southern California,” Serial No. 114–50.

Subcommittee Hearing—A Review of VA’s Loan Guaranty and Specially Adaptive Housing Grant Programs (SAH)

On February 10, 2016, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session and held a hearing to review and examine the Department of Veterans Affairs’ Loan Guaranty and Specially Adaptive Housing programs and how these benefits are being administered.

Testimony was provided by Ms. Heather Ansley, Associate General Counsel for Corporate and Government Relations, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Mr. Ross A. Meglathery, Director, VetsFirst; Mr. James H. Danis II, President of Residential Mortgage Corporation on behalf of the Mortgage Bankers Association; Ms. Sherri Meadows, Vice President, National Association of Realtors; and Mr. Mike Frueh, Director, Loan Guaranty Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See “A Review of VA’s Loan Guaranty and Specially Adaptive Housing Grant Programs (SAH),” Serial No. 114–54.
Subcommittee Field Hearing—Best Practices in Veteran Hiring

On February 19, 2016, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session and held an oversight field hearing at the Anderson Township Civic Center in Cincinnati, OH to discuss how to best recruit and retain veterans in civilian jobs and to highlight several local businesses who are hiring veterans.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Sergeant Dominic F. Gulliford, Recruiting & Background, Cincinnati Police Department; Mr. John Sapp, Executive Director, GE Aviation; Ms. Stephanie Huff, Chief Human Resources Officer, HELP Heating and Air Conditioning; and Mr. Jeff Carper, Executive Sales Director, Total Quality Logistics.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Matt Disher, Military Recruiting Program Manager, Cintas; Mr. Dan Knowles, President & CEO, Tristate Veterans Community Alliance; and Mr. Chris Newsome, Director of Strategy Development, RecruitMilitary. See “Best Practices in Veteran Hiring.” Serial No. 114–56.

Subcommittee Site Visit—Veteran Job Fair, Cincinnati, OH

On February 19, 2016, following the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity oversight field hearing entitled, “Best Practices in Veteran Hiring,” the Majority and Minority Staffs of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity attended subcommittee and Rep. Brad Wenstrup helped to host a job fair for veterans at the Anderson Township Civic Center in Cincinnati Ohio which was hosted by Rep. Brad Wenstrup of Ohio. National and local companies participated in the job fair and gave veterans the opportunity to connect with and speak with employers.

Subcommittee Hearing—A Review of Veterans Preference in Federal Government Hiring

On April 20, 2016, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session and held an oversight hearing to examine veterans’ preference in Federal hiring.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: The Honorable Michael H. Michaud, Assistant Secretary, Veterans’ Employment and Training Service, U.S. Department of Labor; Ms. Carin M. Otero, Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for HR Policy and Planning, Office of Human Resources and Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Mark D. Reinhold, Associate Director for Employee Services, U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: Mr. Aleks Morosky, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Mr. Daniel P. Smith, Assistant Director, Veterans Employment & Education Division, The American Legion; and Mr. Rick Weidman, Executive Director, Government Affairs, Vietnam Veterans of America. See, “A Review of Veterans Preference in Federal Government Hiring,” Serial No. 114–67.
Subcommittee Hearing—Veterans in Tech: Innovative Careers for All Generations of Veterans

On May 17, 2016, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session and held an oversight hearing to discuss the advantages of recruiting and hiring veterans of all ages in the information and technology industry.

Testimony was provided by the following: Mr. Bernard Bergan, Technical Account Manager, Microsoft; Mr. Brian Huseman, Vice President, Public Policy, Amazon; Vice Admiral Joseph Kernan, Chairman, NS2 Serves; and Mr. Todd Bowers, Director, UberMILITARY, Uber. See “Veterans in Tech: Innovative Careers for All Generations of Veterans,” Serial No. 114–69.

Subcommittee Hearing—Examining 21st Century Programs and Strategies for Veteran Job Seekers

On June 15, 2016, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session and held an oversight hearing to examine how veterans are finding jobs in the civilian sector.

Testimony was provided by the following: The Honorable Michael H. Michaud, Assistant Secretary, Veterans’ Employment and Training Service, U.S. Department of Labor; Mr. Eric Eversole, President, Hiring Our Heroes, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation; Mr. Terry D. Howell, Senior Director, Military.com; Mr. LeRoy Acosta, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; and Mr. Greg Call, Head of Veterans Program, LinkedIn. See “Examining 21st Century Programs and Strategies for Veteran Job Seekers,” Serial No. 114–73.

Subcommittee Site Visit—St. Paul, MN

On August 17–18, 2016, the Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity travelled to St. Paul, MN to conduct an oversight visit of the Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Benefit Office. During this visit, Majority staff met with staff of the Regional Loan Center, the Debt Management Center, and the Committee on Waivers all of which are located at the Regional Benefit Office.

Subcommittee Site Visit—New Orleans, LA

On August 23–24, 2016, the Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity travelled to New Orleans, LA to conduct oversight of VA’s education programs and to participate on the legislative panel at the National Association of State Approving Agencies’ (NASAA) annual conference.

Subcommittee Site Visit—San Diego, CA

On October 11–12, 2016, the Professional Staff Member of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity travelled to San Diego, CA to conduct oversight of VA’s education programs and to participate on the legislative panel at the National Association of Veterans’ Program Administrators’ (NAVPA) annual conference.

Subcommittee Site Visit—Muskogee, OK

On October 24–25, 2016, the Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity travelled to Muskogee, OK to conduct an
oversight visit of the Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Benefit Office. During this visit, Majority staff met with the Director of the Regional Benefit Office as well as other staff from the leadership team. The Majority staff also visited the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment offices, the Education Call Center, and the Regional Processing Office all of which are located at the Regional Benefit Office.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

First Session

Subcommittee Legislative Hearing—Legislative Hearing on: Draft Legislation To Improve Reproductive Treatment Provided to Certain Disabled Veterans; Draft Legislation To Direct the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) To Submit an Annual Report on the Veterans Health Administration; H.R. 271; H.R. 627; H.R. 1369; H.R. 1575; and, H.R. 1769

On April 23, 2015, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on: draft legislation to improve reproductive treatment provided to certain disabled veterans; draft legislation to direct the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to submit an annual report on the Veterans Health Administration; H.R. 271, the COVER Act; H.R. 627, to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand the definition of homeless veteran for purposes of benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; H.R. 1369, the Veterans Access to Extended Care Act of 2015; H.R. 1575, the Veterans Access to Extended Care Act of 2015; and, H.R. 1769, the Toxic Exposure Research Act of 2015.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: the Honorable Gus Bilirakis, U.S. House of Representatives, 12th Congressional District of Florida; the Honorable Janice Hahn, U.S. House of Representatives, 44th Congressional District of California; and, the Honorable Jackie Walorski, U.S. House of Representatives, 2nd Congressional District of Indiana.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: Blake Ortner, Deputy Government Relations Director, Paralyzed Veteran of America; Louis J. Celli Jr., Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; John Rowan, National President, Vietnam Veterans of America; and, Adrian Atizado, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by: Rajiv Jain, M.D., Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Patient Care Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Janet Murphy, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Jennifer Gray, Attorney, Office of the General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See “Legislative Hearing on: Draft legislation to improve reproductive treatment provided to certain disabled veterans; Draft legislation to direct the
Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to submit an annual report on the Veterans Health Administration; H.R. 271; H.R. 627; H.R. 1369; H.R. 1575; and, H.R. 1769,” Serial No. 114–17.

Subcommittee Markup of H.R. 271, H.R. 627, H.R. 1575, H.R. 1769, and H.R. 2256


On May 15, 2015, H.R. 271 passed the Health Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On May 15, 2015, H.R. 627 passed the Health Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On May 15, 2015, H.R. 1575 passed the Health Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On May 15, 2015, H.R. 1769 passed the Health Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On May 15, 2015, H.R. 2256 passed the Health Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

Subcommittee Legislative Hearing—Legislative Hearing on: H.R. 272; H.R. 353; H.R. 359; H.R. 421; H.R. 423; H.R. 1356; H.R. 1688; H.R. 1862; H.R. 2464; H.R. 2914; H.R. 2915; H.R. 3016; and, Draft Legislation To Authorize VA Major Medical Facility Construction Projects for FY 2015 and To Make Certain Improvements in the Administration of VA Medical Facility Construction Projects

On July 14, 2015, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on: H.R. 272, the Medal of Honor Priority Care Act; H.R. 353, the Veterans’ Access to Hearing Health Act of 2015; H.R. 359, the Veterans Dog Training Therapy Act; H.R. 421, the Classified Veterans Access to Care Act; H.R. 423, the Newborn Care Improvement Act; H.R. 1356, the Women Veterans Access to Quality Care Act of 2015; H.R. 1688, to amend the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to designate 20 graduate medical education residency positions specifically for the study of optometry; H.R. 1862, the Veterans’ Credit Protection Act; H.R. 2464, the Demanding Accountability for Veterans Act of 2015; H.R. 2914, the Build a Better VA Act; H.R. 2915, the Female Veteran Suicide Prevention Act; H.R. 3016, the VA Pro-
vider Equity Act; and, draft legislation to authorize VA major medical facility construction projects for FY 2015 and to make certain improvements in the administration of VA medical facility construction projects.


On the second panel, testimony was provided by: Ian de Planque, Legislative Director, The American Legion; Adrian Atizado, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; and, Carlos Fuentes, Senior Legislative Associate, National Legislative Service Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by: Madhulika Agarwal, M.D., M.P.H., Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Policy and Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Janet P. Murphy, M.B.A., Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Jessica Tanner, General Attorney Office of General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See “Legislative Hearing on: H.R. 272; H.R. 359; H.R. 421; H.R. 423; H.R. 1356; H.R. 1688; H.R. 1862; H.R. 2464; H.R. 2914; H.R. 2915; H.R. 3016; and, draft legislation to authorize VA major medical facility construction projects for FY 2015 and to make certain improvements in the administration of VA medical facility construction projects,” Serial No. 114–31.


On July 22, 2015, the Subcommittee on Health met and marked up H.R. 421, the Classified Veterans Access to Care Act, introduced by Rep. Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona; H.R. 3106, the Construction Reform Act of 2015, introduced by Chairman Jeff Miller of Florida; En Block H.R. 272, the Medal of Honor Priority Care Act introduced by Rep. Tim Walberg of Michigan; H.R. 359, the Veterans Dog Training Therapy Act, introduced by Rep. Steve Stivers of Ohio; H.R. 423, the Newborn Care Improvement Act, introduced by Rep. Doug Collins of Georgia; H.R. 1862, the Veterans’ Credit Protection Act, introduced by Rep. Charles Boustany of Louisiana; H.R. 2464, the Demanding Accountability for Veterans Act, introduced by Rep. Dan Benishek of Michigan; H.R. 2915, the Female

On July 22, 2015, an amendment to H.R. 421 was offered by Rep. Julia Brownley of California and was adopted by the Health Subcommittee by voice vote. H.R. 421, as amended, passed the Health Subcommittee and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On July 22, 2015, an amendment to H.R. 3106 was offered by Rep. Mike Coffman of Colorado and was adopted by the Health Subcommittee by voice vote. H.R. 3106, as amended, passed the Health Subcommittee and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On July 22, 2015, the following bills were considered en bloc and passed the Health Subcommittee by voice vote and were favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote:

H.R. 272, the Medal of Honor Priority Care Act (Rep. Tim Walberg of Michigan); H.R. 359, the Veterans Dog Training Therapy Act (Rep. Steve Stivers of Ohio); H.R. 423, the Newborn Care Improvement Act (Rep. Doug Collins of Georgia); H.R. 1862, the Veterans’ Credit Protection Act (Rep. Charles Boustany of Louisiana); H.R. 2464, the Demanding Accountability for Veterans Act (Rep. Dan Benishek of Michigan); H.R. 2915, the Female Veteran Suicide Prevention Act (Rep. Julia Brownley of California); and, H.R. 3016, the VA Provider Equity Act (Rep. Brad Wenstrup of Ohio).

Subcommittee Legislative Hearing—Legislative Hearing on:

H.R. 1319; H.R. 1603; H.R. 1904; H.R. 2639; H.R. 3234; H.R. 3471; H.R. 3549; Draft Legislation, the Promoting Responsible Opioid Management and Incorporating Medical Expertise Act; and, a VA Legislative Proposal, the VA Purchased Health Care Streamlining and Modernization Act

On November 17, 2015, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on: H.R. 1319, the Ask Veterans Act; H.R. 1603, the Military Sexual Assault Victims Empowerment Act; H.R. 1904, the Wounded Warrior Workforce Enhancement Act; H.R. 2639, the Marriage and Family Therapists for Veterans Act; H.R. 3234, the Failing VA Medical Center Recovery Act; H.R. 3471, the Veterans Mobility Safety Act of 2015; H.R. 3549, the VA Billing Accountability Act; draft legislation, the Promoting Responsible Opioid Management and Incorporating Medical Expertise Act; and, a VA legislative proposal, the VA Purchased Health Care Streamlining and Modernization Act.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: the Honorable Beto O’Rourke, U.S. House of Representatives, 16th Congressional District of Texas; the Honorable Andy Barr, U.S. House of Representatives, 6th Congressional District of Kentucky; the Honorable Matt Cartwright, U.S. House of Representatives, 17th Congressional District of Pennsylvania; the Honorable Scott Peters, U.S. House of Representatives, 52nd Congressional District of California; the Honorable Martha Roby, U.S. House of Representatives, 2nd Congressional District of Alabama; the Honorable Jackie

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: Adrian Atizado, Deputy National Legislative, Director Disabled American Veterans; LaRanda D. Holt, Assistant Director for Women and Minority Veterans Outreach, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; and, Carlos Fuentes, Senior Legislative Associate, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by: Janet Murphy Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Elias Hernandez Chief Officer, Workforce Management and Consulting Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Harold Kudler, Chief Consultant for Mental Health Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Susan Blauert, Deputy Assistant General Counsel, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See “Legislative Hearing on: H.R. 1319; H.R. 1603; H.R. 1904; H.R. 2639; H.R. 3234; H.R. 3471; H.R. 3549; Draft legislation, the Promoting Responsible Opioid Management and Incorporating Medical Expertise Act; and, a VA legislative proposal, the VA Purchased Health Care Streamlining and Modernization Act,” Serial No. 114–44.

Subcommittee Legislative Hearing—Legislative Hearing on: H.R. 3262; H.R. 3484; H.R. 4056; H.R. 4129; A Draft Bill To Amend the Veterans’ Benefits Programs Improvement Act of 1991 To Authorize VA To Sell Pershing Hall; and, VA’s Legislative Proposal Regarding Fiscal Year 2016 Construction Projects

On Tuesday, December 8, 2015, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on: H.R. 3262, to provide for the conveyance of land of the Illiana Health Care System of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Danville, Illinois; H.R. 3484, the Los Angeles Homeless Veterans Leasing Act of 2016; H.R. 4056, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to convey to the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs all right, title, and interest of the United States to the property known as “The Community Living Center” at the Lake Baldwin Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic, Orlando, Florida; H.R. 4129, the Jumpstart VA Construction Act; draft legislation to amend the Veterans’ Benefits Programs Improvement Act of 1991 to authorize VA to sell Pershing Hall; and, VA’s legislative proposal regarding fiscal year 2016 construction projects.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: the Honorable John Shimkus, U.S. House of Representatives, 15th Congressional District of Illinois; the Honorable Ted Lieu, U.S. House of Representatives, 33rd Congressional District, California; the Honorable John L. Mica U.S. House of Representatives, 7th Congressional
District of Florida; the Honorable Jerry McNerney, U.S. House of Representatives, 9th Congressional District of California; and, the Honorable Mike Coffman, U.S. House of Representatives, 6th Congressional District of Colorado.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: Raymond C. Kelley, Director of the National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Howard Trace, Director of the National Library and Museum Division, The American Legion; Accompanied by: Louis Celli Jr., Director of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by: Stella S. Fiotes, Director of the Office of Construction and Facilities Management, Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Vince Kane, Special Assistant to the Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See “Legislative Hearing on: H.R. 3262; H.R. 3484; H.R. 4056; H.R. 4129; a draft bill to amend the Veterans’ Benefits Programs Improvement Act of 1991 to authorize VA to sell Pershing Hall; and, VA’s legislative proposal regarding fiscal year 2016 construction projects,” Serial No. 114–47.

OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

First Session

Site Visit—Washington, DC

On January 27, 2015, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Health traveled to the Washington, D.C. VA Medical Center for an oversight visit. The purpose of this visit was to tour the War-related Illness and Injury Study Center and the Women’s Health Pavilion as well as learn about the facility’s pain management program and the Opioid Therapy Risk Report.

Subcommittee Hearing—Examining the Quality and Cost of VA Health Care

On January 28, 2015, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session and conducted a hearing examining the quality and cost of VA health care.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: Matthew S. Goldberg, Deputy Assistant Director, National Security Division, Congressional Budget Office; Carl Blake, Associate Executive Director for Government Relations, Paralyzed Veterans of America, on behalf of the Co-Authors of the Independent Budget; Louis Celli Jr., Director, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; and, James Tuchschmidt, M.D., Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See “Examining the Quality and Cost of VA Health Care,” Serial No. 114–5.

Subcommittee Roundtable Discussion—Assessing Fertility Challenges for Veterans with Disabilities

On February 13, 2015, the Subcommittee on Health hosted a roundtable discussion entitled, “Assessing Fertility Challenges for Veterans with Disabilities.”
Subcommittee Roundtable Discussion—Improving the Diagnosis, Treatment, and Research of Toxic Exposure

On March 3, 2015, the Subcommittee on Health hosted a roundtable discussion entitled, “Improving the Diagnosis, Treatment, and Research of Toxic Exposure.”

Site Visit—Minneapolis, MN

On March 31, 2015, Majority and Minority staff for the Subcommittee on Health traveled to the Minneapolis VA Health Care System for an oversight visit. The purpose of this visit was to assess the operations and management of this full-service, level 1A facility that houses one of five VA polytrauma rehabilitation centers.

Subcommittee Hearing—Overcoming Barriers to More Efficient and Effective VA Staffing

On May 15, 2015, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session and held a hearing to examine the ways that VA can overcome barriers in order to function more efficiently and effectively with regard to staffing.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: Joan Clifford MSM, RN, FACHE, Immediate Past President, Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs; Samuel V. Spagnolo M.D., President, National Association of Veterans Affairs Physicians and Dentists; Rubina DaSilva PA–C, President, Veterans Affairs Physician Assistant Association; Jeff L. Morris J.D., Director of Communications and External Affairs, American Board of Physician Specialties; and, Nichol L. Salvo, D.P.M., Member and Employee, American Podiatric Medical Association.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: Thomas Lynch, M.D., Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Clinical Operations, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Elias Hernandez, Deputy Chief Officer for Workforce Management and Consulting, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Donna Gage Ph.D., RN, NE–BC, Chief Officer of Nursing, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.


Subcommittee Hearing—Assessing VA’s Ability to Promptly Pay Non-VA Providers

On June 3, 2015, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session and held a hearing to examine and assess VA’s ability to promptly pay non-VA providers.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: Asbel Montes, Vice President of Reimbursement and Government Affairs, Acadian Ambulance Service; Vince Leist, President and Chief Executive Officer, North Arkansas Regional Medical Center, American Hospital Association; Sam Cook, President, National Mobility Equipment Dealers Association; Gene Migliaccio, Dr. P.H., Deputy Chief Business Officer for Purchased Care, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Joseph Enderle, Director, Purchased Care Operations, Veterans
Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Statements for the Record were provided by: the Honorable Charles W. Boustany Jr., M.D.; American Medical Response; and, Reimbursement Technologies, Inc.—a subsidiary of EmCare, Inc. See “Assessing VA’s Ability to Promptly Pay Non-VA Providers,” Serial No. 114–24.

Subcommittee Roundtable Discussion—Leveraging Technology to Improve Veteran Access to and Quality of Care

On July 16, 2015, the Subcommittee on Health hosted a roundtable discussion entitled, “Leveraging Technology to Improve Veteran Access to and Quality of Care.”

Site Visit—Louisville, KY

On August 20 through August 21, 2015, Majority and Minority staff for the Subcommittee on Health traveled to Louisville, Kentucky, to conduct an oversight visit to the existing Louisville VA Medical Center and the proposed replacement medical center construction site. Staff met current local VA employees and toured the existing facility as well as visited the proposed replacement facility construction site as part of the Committee’s commitment to conducting aggressive oversight of VA major medical facility construction projects.

Site Visit—West Palm Beach, FL

On August 26 through August 27, 2015, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Health and the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations traveled to West Palm Beach, Florida, for an oversight visit to the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center and an educational trip at the direction of the Chairman to the Morse Life Health System. The West Palm Beach VAMC visit included tours of the various clinics and an examination of non-VA care management. The Morse Life Health System recently opened its Mack Pavilion Rehabilitation Center for patients with cardiac, neurological, and orthopedic illnesses and injuries. Furthermore, Morse Life established an Aphasia Center to help patients with stroke or traumatic brain injuries improve communication skills.

Subcommittee Field Hearing—Realizing Quality Rural Care Through Appropriate Staffing and Improved Choice

On September 1, 2015, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session and held a field hearing at the National Guard Armory in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, to examine and discuss achieving quality care through appropriate staffing and improved choice.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: Aaron A. Pay- ment, M.P.A., Chairperson, Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians; Anthony Harrington, veteran, Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan; David W. Pearce, Commander, Post 3676, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Don Howard, Commander, American Legion Post 3; and, Jacqueline Haske, Chippewa County Veteran Service Officer.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: Gina Capra, Director, Office of Rural Health, Veterans Health Administration,
Site Visit—New Orleans, LA

On September 21 through September 22, 2015, Majority and Minority staff for the Subcommittee on Health traveled to New Orleans, Louisiana, for an oversight visit to the replacement VA medical center construction project. The visit was part of the Committee's commitment to continuous, aggressive oversight over VA major medical facility construction projects. Staff also conducted oversight visits to VA facilities in the surrounding area.

Site Visit—San Antonio, TX

On October 13 through October 15, 2015, Majority and Minority staff for the Subcommittee on Health traveled to San Antonio, Texas, to conduct an oversight visit to the San Antonio VA Polytrauma Center and the Brooks Army Medical Center to give staff greater insight into the VA/DOD partnership in the region. The trip also included visits to the U.S. Army Medical Department Center and School, the Center for the Intrepid, the Institute for Surgical Research, the Fisher House, and the Warrior Transition Battalion.

Subcommittee Hearing—Evaluating VA Primary Care Delivery, Workload, and Cost

On October 22, 2015, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session and held a hearing to evaluate and examine the VA Primary Care Delivery, Workload, and Cost.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: Randall B. Williamson, Director, Health Care, Government Accountability Office; Thomas Lynch M.D., Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health Clinical Operations, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Richard C. Stark M.D., Director of Primary Care Operations, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Gordon Schectman, M.D., Chief Consultant for Primary Care Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “Evaluating VA Primary Care Delivery, Workload, and Cost,” Serial No. 114–39.

Subcommittee Roundtable Discussion—Enhancing VA's Use of Emerging Technologies to Improve Veteran Function, Mobility, and Care

On October 27, 2015, the Subcommittee on Health hosted a roundtable discussion entitled, “Enhancing VA's Use of Emerging Technologies to Improve Veteran Function, Mobility, and Care.”
Subcommittee Roundtable Discussion—Assessing How to Improve Recruitment, Retention, and Hiring Practices Across VA

On December 2, 2015, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Health attended and hosted a roundtable discussion, along with Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, entitled, “Assessing How to Improve Recruitment, Retention, and Hiring Practices across VA.”

ACTIVITIES OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

Second Session

Joint Legislative Hearing—Legislative Hearing on Draft Legislation to Improve the Authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire and Retain Physicians and other Employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs

On Wednesday, March 16, 2016, the Subcommittee on Health and the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on draft legislation to improve the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire and retain physicians and other employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: Max Stier, President and Chief Executive Officer, the Partnership for Public Service; Roscoe G. Butler, Deputy Director of Health Care, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Carlos Fuentes, Senior Legislative Associate, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Carolyn Clancy M.D., Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Organizational Excellence, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Elias Hernandez, Chief Officer, Workforce Management and Consulting, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “Legislative Hearing on draft legislation to improve the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire and retain physicians and other employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs,” Serial No. 114–60.

Legislative Hearing—Legislative Hearing on: H.R. 2460; H.R. 3956; H.R. 3974; H.R. 3989; Draft Legislation to Ensure that each VA Medical Facility Complies with Requirements Relating to Scheduling Veterans for Health Care Appointments and to Improve the Uniform Application of Directives; and, Draft Legislation to Direct VA to Establish a List of Drugs that Require an Increased Level of Informed Consent

On Wednesday, April 20, 2016, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on: H.R. 2460, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of adult day health care services for veterans; H.R. 3956, the VA Health Center Management Stability and Improvement Act; H.R. 3974, the Grow Our Own Directive: Physician Assistant Employment and Education Act of 2015; H.R. 3989, the Support Our Mili-
tary Caregivers Act; draft legislation to ensure that each VA medical facility complies with requirements relating to scheduling veterans for health care appointments and to improve the uniform application of directives; and, draft legislation to direct VA to establish a list of drugs that require an increased level of informed consent.


On the second panel, testimony was provided by: Diane M. Zumatto, National Legislative Director, AMVETS; Shurhonda Y. Love, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Fred S. Sganga, Legislative Officer, National Association of State Veterans Homes; Maureen McCarthy M.D., Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Patient Care Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; accompanied by: Susan Blauer, Chief Counsel, Health Care Law Group, Office of General Counsel, on behalf of U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “H.R. 2460; H.R. 3956; H.R. 3974; H.R. 3989; draft legislation to ensure that each VA medical facility complies with requirements relating to scheduling veterans for health care appointments and to improve the uniform application of directives; and, draft legislation to direct VA to establish a list of drugs that require an increased level of informed consent,” Serial No. 114–66


On April 29, 2016, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 353 was offered by Rep. Dan Benishek of Michigan. The amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to by the Health Subcommittee by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 353, as amended, to the Full Committee was offered by Rank-
On April 29, 2016, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3471 was offered by Rep. Dan Benishek of Michigan. The amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to by the Health Subcommittee by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 3471, as amended, to the Full Committee was offered by Ranking Member Julia Brownley of California and was adopted by the Health Subcommittee by voice vote.

On April 29, 2016, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3974 was offered by Rep. Ann Kuster of New Hampshire. The amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to by the Health Subcommittee by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 3974, as amended, to the Full Committee was offered by Ranking Member Julia Brownley of California and was adopted by the Health Subcommittee by voice vote.

On April 29, 2016, an amendment to H.R. 3989 was offered by Rep. Gus Bilirakis of Florida. The amendment was agreed to by the Health Subcommittee by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 3989, as amended, to the Full Committee was offered by Ranking Member Julia Brownley of California and was adopted by the Health Subcommittee by voice vote.

On April 29, 2016, an amendment to H.R. 4977 was offered by Rep. Phil Roe of Tennessee. The amendment was agreed to by the Health Subcommittee by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 4977, as amended, to the Full Committee was offered by Ranking Member Julia Brownley of California and was adopted by the Health Subcommittee by voice vote.

On April 29, 2016, H.R. 2460 and H.R. 3956 were considered by the Subcommittee on Health en bloc. H.R. 2460 and H.R. 3956 passed the Health Subcommittee by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 2460 and H.R. 3956 to the Full Committee was offered by Ranking Member Julia Brownley of California and was adopted by the Health Subcommittee by voice vote.

OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

Second Session

Site Visit—Richmond, Virginia

On January 14, 2016, Majority and Minority staff for the Subcommittee on Health traveled to Richmond, Virginia, for an oversight visit to the Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center and Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center. During the oversight visit, Subcommittee staff assessed the operations and management of the facility, toured the grounds, and met with local facility leaders and subject matter experts to discuss issues including: care in the community, the Choice program, pain and medication management, access and scheduling, patient advocacy and quality management, homelessness, the Caregiver program, recruitment and retention, and mental health and suicide prevention.
Subcommittee Hearing—Choice Consolidation: Evaluating Eligibility Requirements for Care in the Community

On February 2, 2016, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session and conducted a hearing on eligibility requirements for care in the community under VA's plan to consolidate community care programs.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: Adrian Atizado, Deputy National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Carl Blake, Associate Executive Director for Government Relations, Paralyzed Veterans of America; and, Duane Williams, Georgia Leadership Fellow, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Baligh Yehia, M.D., Assistant Deputy Undersecretary for Health for Community Care, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Kristin Cunningham, Director, Business Policy, Chief Business Office, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “Choice Consolidation: Evaluating Eligibility Requirements for Care in the Community,” Serial No. 114–51

Subcommittee Hearing—Choice Consolidation: Improving VA Community Care Billing and Reimbursement

On February 11, 2016, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session and conducted a hearing on billing and reimbursement for care in the community under VA's plan to consolidate community care programs.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: Randall B. Williamson, Health Care Director, Government Accountability Office; Gary K. Abe, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Audits and Evaluations, Office of the Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Larry Reinkemeyer, Kansas City Audit Office Director; and, Baligh Yehia, M.D., the Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Community Care, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Gene Migliaccio M.D., the Deputy Chief Business Officer for Purchased Care, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: Roscoe G. Butler, the Deputy Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; and, Carlos Fuentes, Senior Legislative Associate, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. See, “Choice Consolidation: Improving VA Community Care Billing and Reimbursement,” Serial No. 114–55

Site Visit—West Palm Beach, Florida

On March 8, 2016, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Health traveled to West Palm Beach, Florida, to conduct an oversight visit to the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center. The trip occurred in light of a letter signed by Representatives Frankel, Hastings, Deutch, and Murphy regarding excessive wait times, budget issues, and concerns regarding the Choice program. During the trip, staff met with representatives from facility leadership and Health Net Federal Services, the Choice Program third party administrator in South Florida, to discuss these issues.
Site Visit—Canandaigua, New York

On March 7, 2016, through March 9, 2016, Majority and Minority staff for the Subcommittee on Health and Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations traveled to Canandaigua, New York, to conduct an oversight visit to the Veterans Crisis Line (VCL) in light of a VA Inspector General report detailing serious allegations concerning caller response and quality assurance at the VCL. The report detailed at least one instance where a veteran was transferred to voicemail when calling the VCL. This oversight visit allowed staff to assess firsthand what progress, if any, VA has made in responding to these allegations.

Subcommittee Hearing—Choice Consolidation: Leveraging Provider Networks to Increase Veteran Access

On March 22, 2016, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session and conducted a hearing on provider networks under VA’s plan to consolidate care in the community programs.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: Billy Maynard, President of Health Net Federal Services; David J. McIntyre Jr., President and Chief Executive Officer, TriWest Healthcare Alliance; and, Baligh Yehia, M.D., Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Community Care, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Gene Migliaccio, M.D., Deputy Chief Business Officer, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “Choice Consolidation: Leveraging Provider Networks to Increase Veteran Access,” Serial No. 114–61

Subcommittee Hearing—Joint Hearing With Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations: Evaluating VA IT: Scheduling Modernization and Choice Consolidation

On April 14, 2016, the Subcommittee on Health and the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations met in open session and conducted a hearing on the current status and intended direction of VA’s efforts to modernize information technology.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: LaVerne Council, Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology and Chief Information Officer, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and, David Shulkin M.D., Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Alan Constantian, M.D., Deputy Chief Information Officer. See, “Joint Hearing with Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations: Evaluating VA IT: Scheduling Modernization and Choice Consolidation,” Serial No. 114–63

Subcommittee Field Hearing—Access and Accountability: Examining Obstacles to High Quality Patient Care in Louisiana

On June 20, 2016, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session and conducted a field hearing on the provision of care to veteran patients through the Alexandria VA Health Care System in Pineville, Louisiana.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: Charles Hunter, a local veteran; Gordon Ryder, father of Gerrit Ryder, a deceased
veteran; Caroll Knott, member and former State Commander, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; and, Asbel Montes, Vice President of Reimbursement and Government Affairs, Acadian Ambulance Service.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: Homer Rodgers, Under Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, State of Louisiana; and, Janet L. Henderson, M.D., Chief Medical Officer of the South Central VA Health Care Network, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Shannon Novotny, Acting Deputy Network Director of the South Central VA Health Care Network, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and, Peter C. Dancy Jr., Medical Center Director of the Alexandria VA Health Care System. See, “Access and Accountability: Examining Obstacles to High Quality Patient Care in Louisiana,” Serial No. 114–66

Site Visit—Chicago, Illinois

On June 27, 2016 through June 29, 2016, Majority and Minority staff for the Subcommittee on Health traveled to Chicago, Illinois, to conduct oversight visits to the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center; the Edward Hines Jr. VA Medical Center; the Capt. James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center; and, the VA National Acquisition Center. This oversight trip allowed Subcommittee staff to assess the management and operations of three major VA medical facilities. The Capt. James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center in North Chicago, Illinois, is operated jointly by VA and the Department of Defense and was the subject of a February 2016 Government Accountability Office report, which found ongoing leadership challenges, workforce management issues, data limitations, and difficulties integrating clinical and administrative operations including information technology. Also, in February 2016, the Subcommittee was contacted by a veteran who was unable to access care at the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center and experienced prompt pay issues as a result. Meanwhile, the Edward Hines Jr. VA Medical Center in Hines, Illinois, has been in the media recently for ongoing infestation and sanitation issues in the facility's food preparation areas and for patient care concerns. The oversight trip further allowed Subcommittee staff to oversee the management and operations of the National Acquisition Center, which is responsible for supporting the healthcare requirements of VA and other Government Agencies through the acquisition and delivery of pharmaceuticals; medical, surgical, dental, and patient mobility equipment/supplies; and, high-technology medical equipment.

Subcommittee Hearing—Technology and Treatment: Telemedicine in the VA Healthcare System

On August 9, 2016, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session and conducted a field hearing on VA’s use of telemedicine techniques to increase access to quality care for veteran patients.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: Zachary Walker, a local veteran; Herb Rogove M.D., President and Chief Executive Officer, C30 Telemedicine; Neil Evans M.D., Chief Officer, Office of Connected Care, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and, Scotte Hartronft M.D.,

Site Visit—Portland, Oregon and Vancouver, Washington

On August 9, 2016, through August 11, 2016 Majority and Minority staff for the Subcommittee on Health traveled to Portland, Oregon, to conduct an oversight visit to the Portland VA Medical Center and the VISN 20 Network Office. The oversight visit focused on VA’s research efforts, academic affiliate partnership, transplant program, and leadership challenges as well as care in the community, the Choice program, the Caregiver program, and pain management.

Site Visit—Detroit and Ann Arbor, Michigan

On October 16, through October 19, 2016, Majority and Minority staff for the Subcommittee on Health traveled to Detroit and Ann Arbor, Michigan, to conduct oversight visits to the John D. Dingell VA Medical Center and the VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System. While in Detroit, Subcommittee staff also visited the Henry Ford Health System, which is mentioned multiples times throughout the Commission on Care final report as a healthcare system that is succeeding in areas—like healthcare equity and leadership development—where VA is struggling and that could be seen as useful model for VA to strive toward.

Site Visit—South Bend, Peru, Marion, and Fort Wayne, Indiana

On October 17, 2016, through October 21, 2016, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Health and Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations traveled to South Bend, Peru, Marion, and Fort Wayne, Indiana, to conduct oversight visits to the Northern Indiana Healthcare System. The oversight visit focused on issues including the implementation of the Choice program, staffing shortages, quality of care concerns, investigations of the facilities by the Drug Enforcement Administration, pain management and opioid use, and emergency care.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT & INVESTIGATIONS

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

First Session


On March 19, 2015 the Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on H.R. 571, Veterans Affairs Retaliation Prevention Act of 2015; H.R. 593, Aurora VA Hospital Financing and Construction Reform Act of 2015; H.R. 1015, Protecting Business Opportunities for Veterans

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Ms. Meghan Flanz, Director, Office of Accountability Review, Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Dr. Michael Icardi, National Director of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Services, Veterans Health Administration; Accompanied by: Mr. Stanley Lowe, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Information Security and Chief Information Security Officer, Department of Veteran Affairs; Accompanied by: Mr. Dennis Milsten, CCM, Associate Executive Director, Office of Operations, Office of Construction and Facilities Management, Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Ms. Diane Zumatto, National Legislative Director, AMVETS; Mr. Frank Wilton, Chief Executive Officer, American Association of Tissue Banks; Mr. Daimon E. Geopfert, National Leader, Security and Privacy Consulting, McGladrey, LLP. See “Legislative Hearing on H.R. 571, H.R. 593, H.R. 1015, H.R. 1016, H.R. 1017, H.R. 1128, and H.R. 1129,” Serial No. 114–11.

Subcommittee Markup of H.R. 571; H.R. 1015; H.R. 1016; H.R. 1017


On April 21, 2015 H.R. 571, an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to H.R. 571 was offered by Rep. Mike Coffman of Colorado was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 571, as amended passed the O&I Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On April 21, 2015 H.R. 1015, an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to H.R. 1015 was offered by Rep. Tim Huelskamp of Kansas was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 1015, as amended passed the O&I Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On April 21, 2015 H.R. 1016, an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to H.R. 1016 was offered by Rep. Phil Roe of Tennessee was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 1016, as amended passed the O&I Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On April 21, 2015 H.R. 1017, an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to H.R. 1017 was offered by Rep. Jackie Walorski of Indiana was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 1017, as amended passed the O&I Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.
First Session

Subcommittee Hearing—An Examination of Waste and Abuse Associated with VA’s Management of Land-Use Agreements

On February 10, 2015 the Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations conducted a hearing examining and evaluating the waste and abuse associated with VA’s management of land-use agreements.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Ms. Janet P. Murphy, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Health, Operations and Management, Veterans Health Administration; Accompanied by: Dr. Skye McDougall, PhD, Acting Director, Desert Pacific Healthcare Network, Veterans Health Administration; Mr. Stephen Lord, Managing Director, Forensic Audits and Investigative Service, U.S. Government Accountability Office; Mr. Edward Lilley, Assistant Director for Healthcare, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion.

Subcommittee Hearing—Addressing Continued Whistleblower Retaliation Within VA

On April 13, 2015 the Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations conducted a hearing to address the continued whistleblower retaliation within the VA.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Ms. Meghan Flanz, Director, Office of Accountability Review, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; The Honorable Carolyn Lerner, Special Counsel, Office of Special Counsel; Dr. Christian Head, M.D., Associate Director—Chief of Staff—Legal and Quality Assurance, Greater Los Angeles VA Health Care System; Dr. Maryann Hooker, M.D., Neurologist, Wilmington VA Medical Center President, Local 342, American Federation of Government Employees; Mr. Richard Tremaine, MBA, Associate Director, VA Central Alabama Healthcare System. See, “Addressing Continued Whistleblower Retaliation Within VA,” Serial No. 114–13.

Subcommittee Hearing—Waste, Fraud, and Abuse in VA’s Purchase Card Program

On May 14, 2015 the Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations conducted a hearing to review and examine the waste, fraud, and abuse in the VA’s Purchase Card Program.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Edward J. Murray, Acting Assistant Secretary for Management and Interim Chief Financial Officer, Office of Management, Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Mr. Gregory Giddens, Principal Executive Director, Office of Acquisition, Logistics and Construction, Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Jan Frye, Deputy Assistant Secretary and Senior Procurement Executive, Office of Acquisition and Logistics, Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Mr. Norbert Doyle, Chief Procurement & Logistics Officer, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Linda A. Halliday, Assistant Inspector General for Audits
and Evaluations, Office of Inspector General, Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Mr. Quentin G. Aucoin, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Investigations (Field Operations), Office of Inspector General, Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Mr. Murray Leigh, Director, Financial Integrity Division, Office of Audits and Evaluations, Office of Inspector General, Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Mr. Kent Wrathall, Director, Atlanta Office of Audits and Evaluations, Office of Inspector General, Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “Waste, Fraud, and Abuse in VA’s Purchase Card Program,” Serial No. 114–20.

Subcommittee Hearing—Circumvention of Contracts in the Provision of Non-VA Healthcare

On June 1, 2015 the Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations conducted a hearing to examine the circumvention of contracts in the provision of non-VA healthcare.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Edward J. Murray Acting Assistant Secretary for Management and Interim Chief Financial Officer Office of Management Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Mr. Gregory Giddens Principal Executive Director Office of Acquisition, Logistics and Construction Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Mr. Norbert Doyle Chief Procurement & Logistics Officer Veterans Health Administration Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Ms. Phillipa Anderson Assistant General Counsel, Government Contracts Office of General Counsel Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Jan Frye Deputy Assistant Secretary and Senior Procurement Executive Office of Acquisition and Logistics Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Christopher LaBonte United States Army Veteran; Mr. Randall Williamson Director, Healthcare Issues, Government Accountability Office. See “Circumvention of Contracts in the Provision of Non-VA Healthcare,” Serial No. 114–22.

Subcommittee Hearing—Prescription Mismanagement and the Risk of Veteran Suicide

On June 10, 2015 the Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations conducted a hearing to assess the prescription mismanagement and the risk of veteran suicide.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Carolyn Clancy, M.D., Interim Under Secretary for Health, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Mr. Michael Valentino, Chief Consultant, Pharmacy Benefits Management Service, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Harold Kudler, M.D. Chief Consultant, Mental Health Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Randall Williamson, Director, Health Care Issues, Government Accountability Office; Jacqueline Maffuci, Ph.D., Research Director, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. See “Prescription Mismanagement and the Risk of Veteran Suicide,” Serial No. 114–25.
Subcommittee Hearing—Joint Hearing With Small Business Committee, Subcommittee on Investigations, Regulations, and Oversight: Manipulation and Fraud in the Reporting of VA Small Business Goals

On June 23, 2015 the Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations conducted a joint hearing with the Small Business Committee to examine manipulation and fraud in the reporting of VA small business goals.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Jan Frye, Deputy Assistant Secretary and Senior Procurement, Executive Office of Acquisition and Logistics, Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Thomas J. Leney, Executive Director, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by Mr. Norbert Doyle, Chief Procurement & Logistics Officer, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. John Shoraka, Associate Administrator, Office of Government Contracting & Business Development, Small Business Administration; Mr. John Youel Page, Deputy Commissioner, Federal Acquisition Service, General Services Administration. See “Joint Hearing with Small Business Committee, Subcommittee on Investigations, Regulations, and Oversight: Manipulation and Fraud in the Reporting of VA Small Business Goals,” Serial No. 114–27.

Subcommittee Hearing—Lack of Oversight of Interagency Agreements—VA Procurement Failures Continued

On July 21, 2015 the Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations conducted a hearing to examine the lack of oversight of interagency agreements and to continue the assessment on VA procurement failures.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Mr. C. Ford Heard III, Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary, Procurement Policy, Systems and Oversight, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Mr. David A. Orso, Executive Director, Enterprise Program Management Office, Office of Policy and Planning, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Ms. Michele R. Foster, Associate Executive Director, Technology Acquisition Center, Office of Acquisition Operations, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Michele Mackin, Director Acquisition and Sourcing Management Team, U.S. Government Accountability Office. See, “Lack of Oversight of Interagency Agreements—VA Procurement Failures Continued,” Serial No. 114–33.

Site Visit—Louisville, Kentucky

On August 20 and 21, 2015, Majority staff for the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee along with Majority staff for the Health Subcommittee, Minority staff, and Senate Veterans Affairs Committee staff travelled to Louisville, Kentucky on a staff delegation for briefings and site visits regarding the planned replacement Robley Rex medical center. The Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee Majority staff also met with local stakeholders about the project. The Health Subcommittee Majority and Minority staff and Senate Veterans Affairs Committee staff met with VA personnel at the existing Robley Rex medical center about healthcare.
Subcommittee Hearing—Joint Subcommittee Hearing of the HVAC Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations and OGR Subcommittee on Information Technology: VA and DOD IT: Electronic Health Records Interoperability

On October 27, 2015, the Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations conducted a joint hearing with the OGR Subcommittee on Information Technology to examine VA and DOD IT in relation to the interoperability of electronic health records.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by The Honorable LaVerne Council, Assistant Secretary for Information Technology, Chief Information Officer, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. David DeVries, Principal Deputy Chief Information Officer U.S. Department of Defense; Mr. Christopher Miller, Program Executive Officer, U.S. Department of Defense; Ms. Valarie Melvin, Director of Information Management and Technology Resources Issues, U.S. Government Accountability Office. See “Joint Subcommittee Hearing of the HVAC Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations & OGR Subcommittee on Information Technology: VA and DOD IT: Electronic Health Records Interoperability,” this hearing was hosted by the OGR Subcommittee on Information and technology and therefore does not have a House Veterans’ Affairs Committee serial number.

Subcommittee Hearing—Joint Subcommittee Hearing: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations and Small Business Committee, Subcommittee on Contracting and Workforce, “An Examination of Continued Challenges in VA’s Vets First Verification Process”

On November 4, 2015, the Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations held a joint hearing with the Small Business Committee and Subcommittee on Contracting and Workforce to assess and examine the challenges within the VA’s Vets First Verification Process.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Mr. William Shear, Director, Financial Markets and Community Investment, United States Government Accountability Office; Mr. Quentin Aucoin, Assistant Inspector General for Investigations, United States Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Tom Leney, Executive Director, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, United States Department of Veterans Affairs. See “Joint Subcommittee Hearing: Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations and Small Business Committee, Subcommittee on Contracting and Workforce, “An Examination of Continued Challenges in VA’s Vets First Verification Process,” Serial No. 114–43.

Site Visit—Frederick, Maryland

On November 13, 2015, Majority staff for the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee traveled to Frederick, Maryland to tour and receive briefings on the VA Acquisition Academy, Warriors to Workforce program, and other recruitment and training programs.
Second Session

Site Visit—Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

On January 11–15, 2016, Majority staff for the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee travelled to the Philadelphia VA Medical Center to review suicide prevention, tracking of controlled substances, privacy policies, patient safety concerns, and utilization of choice programs.

Site Visit—Fredericksburg, Virginia

On January 28, 2016, Majority staff for the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee travelled to Fredericksburg, Virginia to visit the VA Strategic Acquisition Center and receive a briefing on its activities.

Site Visit—Marion, Indiana

On February 16–18, 2016, Majority staff for the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee travelled to the Marion VA Medical Center after receiving complaints about the current provider shortages and patient care concerns. Staff toured the facility and met with whistleblowers.

Subcommittee Hearing—Persian Gulf War: An Assessment of Health Outcomes on the 25th Anniversary

On Tuesday, February 23, 2016, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing to evaluate VA's treatment of— and health outcomes for—veterans suffering from Gulf War Illness. On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Carolyn Clancy, M.D., Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Organizational Excellence, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Stephen Hunt, M.D., M.P.H. Director, Post-Deployment Integrated Care Initiative, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Victor Kalasinsky, Ph.D, Senior Program Manager, Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses Research, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Deborah Cory-Slechta, Ph.D, Professor of Environmental Medicine, Pediatrics and Public Health Sciences, Acting Chair, Department of Environmental Medicine, University of Rochester School of Medicine; Roberta F. White, Ph.D, Chair, Department of Environmental Health, Boston University School of Public Health; Accompanied by: Mr. James H. Binns, Gulf War Researcher, Former Chairman, Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses; Mr. Anthony Hardie, Gulf War Veteran, Director, Veterans for Common Sense; Accompanied by: Mr. David K. Winnett, II, Gulf War Veteran. See, “Persian Gulf War: An Assessment of Health Outcomes on the 25th Anniversary,” Serial No. 114–57.

Site Visit—Evansville and Vincennes, Indiana

On March 1–4, 2016, Majority staff for the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee travelled to the Evansville Health Care Center and the Vincennes Community Based Outpatient Clinic.
During these site visits, staff met with whistleblowers regarding the provider shortage and high turnover rates at the Health Care Center and met with pharmacy staff, Choice program champions, and toured each facility.

Subcommittee Field Hearing—Addressing VA Opioid Prescriptions and Pain Management Practices

On Friday, March 4, 2016, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a field hearing in Concord, New Hampshire to examine VA's opioid prescription management for mental health and chronic pain issues.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Peter Kelleher, Chief Executive Officer, Harbor Homes; Ms. Christine Weber, Director of Substance Abuse Services, Easter Seals Farnum Center; Mr. Joseph Foster, Attorney General, New Hampshire Department of Justice; Julie Franklin, M.D., Pain Medicine Practitioner, White River Junction, VT VA Medical Center; Accompanied by: Grigory Chernyak, M.D., Chief of Anesthesiology, Manchester, NH VA Medical Center. See, “Addressing VA Opioid Prescriptions and Pain Management Practices,” Serial No. 114–58.

Site Visit—Canandaigua, New York

On March 7–9, 2016, Majority and Minority staff for the Oversight and Investigations and Health Subcommittees travelled to Canandaigua VA Medical Center to meet with staff from the VA crisis call center. Staff also met with Choice program champions and pharmacy staff.

Subcommittee Hearing—Joint Subcommittee Hearing of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs and Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations: Twenty-Five Years After the Persian Gulf War: An Assessment of VA's Disability Claim Process With Respect to Gulf War Illness

On Tuesday, March 15, 2016, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Oversight and Subcommittee on Investigations held a hearing to evaluate VA's handling of claims processing and appeals for veterans who suffer from service connected disabilities related to the war, specifically Gulf War Illness.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Mr. David R. McLenachen, Deputy Under Secretary for Disability Assistance, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Mr. Bradley Flohr, Senior Advisor, Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Zachary Hearn, Deputy Director for Claims, Veteran Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Mr. Aleksandr Morosky, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Mr. Rick Weidman, Executive Director for Policy and Government Affairs, Vietnam Veterans of America; Mr. Richard V. Spataro, Director of Training and Publications, National Veterans Legal Services Program. See, “Twenty Five Years After the Persian Gulf War: An Assessment of VA's Disability Claim Process with Respect to Gulf War Illness,” Serial No. 114–59.
Site Visit—Denver, Colorado

On March 18–21, 2016, Majority staff for the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee travelled to the Denver VA Medical Center to review VA’s tracking of controlled substances, Choice program implementation, academic affiliations relationship, and the facility's research program. Findings from this site visit led to communication with the DEA regarding VA monitoring of controlled substances stored on site. Also, staff toured the new Aurora, Colorado Medical Center and met with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to discuss construction progress.

Subcommittee Hearing—Evaluating VA IT: Scheduling Modernization and Choice Consolidation

On April 14, 2016, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations met in open session to conduct a hearing to evaluate scheduling modernization and choice consolidation at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by the Honorable David Shulkin, M.D., Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration; and the Honorable LaVerne Council, Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology and Chief Information Officer of the Office of Information and Technology within the Department of Veterans Affairs. Honorable Council was accompanied by Mr. Alan Constantian, Deputy Chief Information Officer, Office of Information Technology, on behalf of U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See “Evaluating VA IT: Scheduling Modernization and Choice Consolidation,” Serial No. 114–63.

Subcommittee Field Hearing—Assessing VA Oversight of Drug Prescription Practices and Proper Use of Medical Facilities

On Friday, May 20, 2016, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a field hearing in Denver, Colorado to address numerous issues regarding VA’s, prescription, and oversight practices for controlled substances as well as its appropriate use of medical facilities to benefit veterans.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Ralph Gigliotti, Network Director, Veterans Integrated Service Network 19, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Ms. Sallie Houser-Hanfelder, Director, Eastern Colorado Health Care System, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Ellen Mangione, M.D., Chief of Staff, Eastern Colorado Health Care System, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “Assessing VA Oversight of Drug Prescription Practices and Proper Use of Medical Facilities,” Serial No. 114–70.

Site Visit—Baltimore, Maryland

On May 26, 2016, Majority staff for the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee traveled to the Baltimore VA Medical Center to tour and question facility leadership on certain programs, including pharmacy and drug diversion, mental health, research and the VA nonprofit corporations, within their facility.
Site Visit—Boston, Massachusetts

On May 31–June 1, 2016, Majority staff for the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee traveled to the VA Boston Healthcare System to tour and question facility leadership on certain programs, to include the pharmacy and drug diversion, mental health, research and the VA nonprofit corporations, within their facility.

Site Visit—Northfield, New Jersey

On June 5–6, 2016, Majority staff for the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee traveled to the Atlantic County Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Northfield, New Jersey to review staffing concerns and a veteran suicide outside of the facility.

Subcommittee Hearing—VA and Academic Affiliates: Who Benefits?

On Tuesday, June 7, 2016, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing to address the relationship between VA and the academic affiliates, particularly regarding issues and concerns related to sole-source contracting, billing issues, research funding, space, data, and equipment.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Robert L. Jesse, M.D., Ph.D., Chief Academic Affiliations Officer, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: David Atkins, M.D., M.P.H., Acting Chief Research and Development Officer, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Ricky L. Lemmon, Acting Chief Procurement and Logistics Officer, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Janis Orlowski, MD, MACP, Chief Health Care Officer, Association of American Medical Colleges; Nancy Watterson-Diorio, Board Member, National Association of Veterans’ Research and Education Foundations; Mr. Randall Williamson, Director, Health Care Issues, Government Accountability Office. See, “VA and Academic Affiliates: Who Benefits?,” Serial No. 114–71.

Site Visit—Northport, New York

On August 31–September 2, 2016, Majority staff for the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee traveled to Northport, New York to tour and question the VAMC on certain programs, to include the pharmacy and drug diversion, mental health, research and the VA nonprofit corporations, within their facility.

Subcommittee Hearing—VA Procurement: Identifying Obstacles to Reform

On Tuesday, September 20, 2016, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held an oversight hearing on root causes of the procurement problems in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Greg Giddens, Executive Director, Acquisition, Logistics and Construction, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Accompanied by: Mr. Rick Lemmon, Acting Chief Procurement and Logistics Officer, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Ms. Michele Mackin, Director, Acquisition and Sourcing Management, U.S. Government Accountability Office. See, “VA Procurement: Identifying Obstacles to Reform.” Serial No. 114–81.
Site Visit—Fort Wayne, Peru, and South Bend, Indiana

On October 17–21, 2016, Majority staff for the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee traveled to VA medical facilities in Fort Wayne, Indiana; Peru, Indiana; and South Bend, Indiana to question VA officials on certain programs, to include the pharmacy and drug diversion, mental health, and scheduling issues at these facilities.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT AND OTHER EXECUTIVE BRANCH COMMUNICATIONS

First Session

January 14, 2015: Communication 00071, from the Acting Director, Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s Major final rule Caregivers Program (RIN: 2900–AN94) received January 12, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A).


February 11, 2015: Memorial 0004, Under clause 3 of Rule XII, a memorial of the following title was presented, as follows: By the Speaker: A memorial of the House of Representatives of the State of Ohio, relative to Substitute House Resolution No. 283, urging the Congress and the Department of Defense to protect and uphold the religious and free speech rights of military service members.


February 24, 2015: Memorial 0010, Under clause 3 of Rule XII, a memorial of the following title was presented, as follows: By the Speaker: A memorial of the House of Representatives of the State of Ohio, relative to Substitute House Resolution No. 283, urging the Congress and the Department of Defense to protect and uphold the religious and free speech rights of military service members.

February 27, 2015: Communication 00611, from the Acting Director, Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel (02REG), Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s interim final rule—Automobile or Other Conveyance and Adaptive Equipment Certificate of Eligibility for Veterans or Members of the Armed Forces with Amytrophic Lateral Sclerosis (RIN: 2900–AP26) received February 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A).

February 27, 2015: Communication 00612, from the Acting Director, Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel (02REG), Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Sup-

March 13, 2015: Communication 00783, from the Deputy Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs; and the Under Secretary, Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting the FY 2014 report on the activities of the Extremity Trauma and Amputation Center of Excellence (EACE), pursuant to Sec. 723 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act of FY 2009, Pub. L. 110–417.


March 18, 2015: Communication 00824, from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of Defense, transmitting a draft of proposed legislation titled National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2016”.


April 14, 2015: Communication 01116, from the Staff performing the duties of the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of Defense, transmitting additional legislative proposals from the Department of Defense as a follow up to an earlier transmittal of a request for enactment of proposed legislation titled the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016.

April 16, 2015: Communication 01174, from the Acting Director, Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel, National Cemetery Administration, Department of Veterans’ Affairs, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Reimbursement for Caskets and Urns for Burial of Unclaimed Remains in a National Cemetery (RIN: 2900–AO99) received April 13, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A).

April 30, 2015: Communication 01346, from the Acting Director, Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel (02 REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Technical Corrections to 38 CFR Part 3 (RIN:2900–AP33) received April 27, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A).

April 30, 2015: Communication 01347, from the Acting Director, Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel (02 REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Updating Certain Delegation of Authority in VA Medical Regulations (RIN: 2900–AP17) received April 27, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A).

May 1, 2015: Communication 01374, from the Chief Impact Analyst, Regulation Policy Management, Office of the General Counsel,
Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s interim final rule—Driving Distance Eligibility for the Veterans Choice Program (RIN: 2900–AP24) received April 27, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A).

May 5, 2015: Communication 01391, from the Deputy Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting a draft bill to authorize $977,600,000 for major medical facility construction projects for FY 2015, as well as to amend the Department of Veterans Affairs’ Enhanced-Use Lease Authority.

May 8, 2015: Communication 01417, from the Acting Director, Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel (02REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program (RIN:2900–AO71) received May 6, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A).

May 12, 2015: Communication 01452, from the Deputy Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting a draft bill, the “Department of Veterans Affairs Purchased Health Care Streamlining and Modernizing Act.”


May 22, 2015: Communication 01585 from the Acting Director, Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel (02REG), Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program (RIN:2900–A071/WP2012–028) received May 20, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A).

June 2, 2015: Communication 01698, from the Program Manager, Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel (02REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s final rule Grants for Adaptive Sports Programs for Disabled Veterans and Disabled Members of the Armed Forces (RIN:2900–AP07) received June 1, 2015, pursuant to U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A).

June 9, 2015: Memorial 0050, Under Clause 3 of Rule XII, a memorial of the following title was presented, as follows: By the Speaker: A memorial of the Legislature of the State of Arizona, relative to Senate Concurrent Memorial 1008, urging the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to review the disability rating process.

June 17, 2015: Communication 01862, from the Deputy Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs, and Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense Joint Executive Committee FY 2014 Annual Report, pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 8111.

June 18, 2015: Memorial 0065, Under clause 3 of Rule XII, a memorial of the following title was presented as follows: By the Speaker: A memorial of the Legislature of the State of Oregon, relative to the House Joint Memorial 9, urging the Congress to recognize the presumption of a service connection for Agent Orange ex-
posure for United States veteran who served in the waters defined by the combat zone in Vietnam, and in the airspace over the combat zone.

June 18, 2015: Memorial 0064, Under clause 3 of Rule XII, a memorial of the following title was presented as follows: By the Speaker: A memorial of the Legislature of the State of Oregon, relative to the House Joint Memorial 11, urging the Congress to support the mission of the Veterans Health Administration Office of Rural Health and efforts to improve access health care for veterans in rural areas.


July 7, 2015: Communication 02056, from the Director, National Legislative Division, The American Legion, transmitting the consolidated financial statements of the American Legion as of December 31, 2014 and 2013 with supplemental data.

July 9, 2015: Memorial 0074, Under Clause 3 of Rule XII, a memorial of the following title was presented, as follows: By the Speaker: A memorial of the Senate of State of Hawaii, relative to Senate Resolution No. 44, urging Congress and the President of the United States to support the passage of legislation to expedite family reunification for certain Filipino veteran of World War II.

July 15, 2015: Communication 02183, from the Acting Director, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel (02REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule—Agency Interpretation of Prosthetic Replacement of a Joint (RIN:2900–AP38) received July 14, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Pub. L. 104–121, Sec. 251.

July 15, 2015: Communication 02184, from the Acting Director, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel (02REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule—Uniform Administration Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards; Updating References (RIN: 2900–AP22) received July 14, 2015 pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Pub. L. 104–121, Sec. 251.

July 21, 2015: Communication 02261, from the Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting pursuant to Sec. 202 of Pub. L. 113–146, the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014, an update on the status of the Commissioner nominations, the current timeline for convening the Commission on Care, and a copy of the Commission on Care charter.

September 8, 2015: Communication 02632, from the Acting Director, Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel (02REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s interim final rule—Vet Centers (RIN: 2900–AP21) received August 10, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Pub. L. 104–121, Sec. 251.

September 8, 2015: Communication 02630, from the Chief Impact Analyst, Office of Regulation Policy, Office of the General Counsel (02REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Loan Guaranty: Adjustable Rate Mortgage Notification Requirements and Look-Back Period (RIN: 2900–AP25) received August 21, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Pub. L. 104–121, Sec. 251.

September 8, 2015: Communication 02631, from the Chief Impact Analyst, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel (02REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Additional Compensation on Account of Children Adopted Out of Veteran’s Family (RIN: 2900–AP18) received August 13, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Pub. L. 104–121, Sec. 251.

September 11, 2015: Communication 02720, from the Chairperson, Commission on Care, transmitting an update on the work of the Commission that was established in Sec. 202 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014.

September 15, 2015: Communication 02778, from the Chief Impact Analyst, Regulation Policy and Management Staff, Office of the General Counsel (02REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Animals on VA Property (RIN:2900–AO39) received September 2, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Pub. L. 104–121, Sec. 251.

September 18, 2015: Communication 02867, from the Chief Impact Analyst, Regulation Policy and Management Staff, Office of the General Counsel (02REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Copayments for Medications in 2015 (RIN: 2900–AP15) received September 15, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Pub. L. 104–121, Sec. 251.

September 22, 2015: Communication 02919, from the Chief Impact Analyst, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel (02REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Loan Guarantee—专门为 Housing Assistive Technology Grant Program (RIN:2900–AO70) received September 21, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Pub. L. 104–121, Sec. 251.

October 9, 2015: Communication 03147, from the Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting a letter reporting the FY 2015 expenditures from the Pershing Hall Revolving Fund for projects, activities, and facilities that support the mission of the
Department of Veterans Affairs, pursuant to Pub. L. 102–86, Sec. 403(d)(6)(c).

November 17, 2015: Communication 03480, from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting legislative proposals which would significantly strengthen the protections afforded to servicemembers and their families under existing civil rights laws received November 16, 2015.

November 19, 2015: A message from the President of the United States, transmitting the Administration’s 2015 National Drug Control Strategy, pursuant to 21 U.S.C. 1705; Pub. L. 109–469, Sec. 706(a); (120 Stat. 3513).

November 19, 2015: Communication 03525, from the Chief Impact Analyst, Office of Regulatory Policy, Office of the General Counsel (02REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s Major final rule—Expanded Access to Non-VA Care through the Veterans Choice Program (RIN:2900–AP24) received November 17, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104–121 Sec. 251.

November 30, 2015: Communication 03571, from the Chief Impact Analyst, Office of Regulation Policy, Office of the General Counsel (02REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s direct final rule—Exempting Mental Health Peer Support Services from Copayments (RIN:2900–AP11) received November 20, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104–121 Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 268).

December 7, 2015: Communication 03687, from the Chief Impact Analyst, Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the general Counsel (02REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Expanded Access to Non-VA Care through the Veterans Choice Program (RIN: 2900–AP60) received December 3, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); added by Public Law 101–121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868).

December 8, 2015: Communication 03727, from the Chief Impact Analyst, Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel (02REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Uniform Administrative Requirement, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards; Updating References (RIN: 2900–AP03) received December 3, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); added by Public Law 104–121 Sec. 251 (110 Stat. 868).

December 16, 2015: Communication 03790, from the Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting a draft bill to authorize major medical facility projects for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2016, and other purposes, pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 8104(a)(2).

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT AND OTHER EXECUTIVE BRANCH COMMUNICATIONS

Second Session

January 5, 2016: Communication 03859 from the National Adjutant, Chief Executive Officer, Disabled American Veterans, transmitting the reports and proceeding of the 2015 National Conven-
tion of the Disabled American Veterans, held in Denver, Colorado, August 8–11, 2015, pursuant to 36 U.S.C. 50308; Public Law 105–225, Sec. 50308; (112 Stat. 1345). Referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and ordered to be printed January 5, 2016.

January 11, 2016: Communication 03989 from the Director, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel (02 REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Payment of Emergency Medication by VA (RIN:2900–AP34) received December 29, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104–121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868).

January 12, 2016: Communication 04028 from the Director, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel (02 REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Removal of requirement to File Direct-Pay fee Agreements with the Office of the General Counsel (RIN: 2900–AP28) received December 29, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104–121, Sec 251 (110 Stat. 868).

January 25, 2016: Communication 4115 from the Chief Impact Analyst, Office of Regulation Policy, Office of the General Counsel (02REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Automobile or Other Conveyance and Adaptive Equipment Certificate of Eligibility for Veterans or Members of the Armed Forces with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis connected to Military Service (RIN: 2900–AP26) received January 14, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104–121, Sec 251 (110 Stat. 868).

February 23, 2016: Memorial 0173 under clause 3 of rule XII, a memorial of the following title was presented, as follows: By the Speaker: A memorial of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, relative to House concurrent Resolution No. 7, urging the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and the United States Congress to create a pilot program in Michigan instituting a flexible Veterans Choice Card system structured similar to a traditional health care program for all veterans in Michigan.

March 2, 2016: Communication 04549 from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department’s First Quarterly Report for HY 2016 on the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994, pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 4332(b)(1); Public Law 103–353, Sec. 2(a) (as added by Public Law 110–389, Sec. 312(c)); (122 Stat. 4165). Referred jointly to the Committees on the Judiciary and Veterans’ Affairs.

March 14, 2016: Communication 04639 from the Director, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel (02 REG), National Cemetery Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, the Department’s final rule—Applicants for VA Memorialization Benefits (RIN: 2900–AO95) received March 10, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104–121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868).

March 14, 2016: Communication 04640 from the Director, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel (02 REG), Veterans Health Administration, Department of Vet-
March 14, 2016: Communication 04641 from the Chief Impact Analyst, Office of Regulation Policy, Office of the General Counsel (02 REG), Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Veterans Transportation Service (RIN: 2900–A092) received March 10, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104–121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868).

March 15, 2016: Communication 04653 from the Director, National Legislation Division, The American Legion, a financial statement and independent audit of The American Legion, and proceedings of the 97th Annual National Convention of The American Legion, held in Baltimore, Maryland from September 1–3, 2015, and a report on the organization’s activities for the year preceding the convention, pursuant to 36 U.S.C. 10101(b)(1); Public Law 105–225, 10101(b)(1); (112 Stat. 1283).

March 21, 2016: Communication 04683 from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of Defense, transmitting the draft of proposed legislation entitled the “National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017.” Referred jointly to the Committees on Armed Services, Oversight and Government Reform, Education and the Workforce, Veterans’ Affairs, Ways and Means, Energy and Commerce, Transportation and Infrastructure, Foreign Affairs, House Administration, the Judiciary, Natural Resources, and Rules.

April 11, 2016: Communication 04993 from the Chief Impact Analyst, ORPM. Office of the General Counsel (02 REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s interim final rule—Telephone enrollment in the VA healthcare system (RIN: 2900–AP68) received March 29, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104–121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868).

April 11, 2016: Memorial 0194; Under clause 3 of rule XII, a memorial of the following title was presented, as follows: By the Speaker: A memorial of the Senate of the State of Colorado, relative to Senate Resolution 16–002, Concerning Restoring the Presumption of Service Connection for Agent Orange Exposure for United States Vietnam Veterans Through the “Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2015.”

April 28, 2016: Communication 05214 from the Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting a draft bill to authorize major medical facility projects for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2017, and for other purposes, pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 8104(a)(2).

April 28, 2016: Memorial 0211, Under clause 3 of rule XII, a memorial of the following title was presented, as follows: By the Speaker: A memorial of General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, relative to House Joint Resolution No. 481, urging Congress to pass bills for the implementation of the Veterans Affairs New Veterans Choice Program.
April 29, 2016: Memorial 0213 Under clause 3 of rule XII, a memorial of the following title was presented, as follows: By the Speaker: A memorial of the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, relative to House Joint Resolution No. 481, urging Congress to pass bills for the implementation of the Veterans Affairs New Veterans Choice Program.

May 3, 2016: Communication 05249 from the Director, Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel (02REG), Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Technical Corrections—VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Nomenclature Change for Position Title (RIN: 2900–AP65) received April 29, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104–121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868).

May 3, 2016: Communication 05250 from the Acting Director, Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel (02REG), Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Health Care for Certain Children of Vietnam Veterans and Certain Korea Veterans—Covered Birth Defects and Spina Bifida (RIN: 2900–AP09) received April 29, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104–121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868).

May 3, 2016: Communication 05251 the Adjutant General, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, transmitting the proceedings of the 116th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, July 18–22, 2015, pursuant to 44 U.S.C. 1332; (Public Law 90–620 (as amended by Public Law 105–225, Sec. 3); (112 Stat. 1498).

May 6, 2016: Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker’s table as follows: Communication 05306 from the Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting the second Quarterly Report for FY 2016 on the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994, pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 4332(b)(2); Public Law 103–353, Sec. 2(a) (as added by Public Law 110–389, Sec. 312(c)); (112 Stat. 4165). Referred jointly to the Committee on the Judiciary and Veterans’ Affairs.

May 24, 2016: Memorial 0235 under clause 3 of rule XII, a memorial of the following title was presented, as follows: By the Speaker: A memorial of the Legislature of the State of Arizona, relative to House Concurrent Memorial 2006, urging the United States Congress to adopt legislation similar to the Toxic Exposure Research Act of 2015. Referred jointly to the Committees on Armed Services and Veterans’ Affairs.

May 25, 2016: Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker’s table as follows: Communication 05500 from the Director, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel (02REG), Office of the Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s final rule—General Agency Final Regulations Implementing Executive Order 13559: Fundamental Principles and Policymaking Criteria for Partnerships With Faith-Based and Other Neighborhood Organizations (RIN: 2900–AP05) received May 19, 2016, pur-
June 3, 2016: Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker’s table as follows: Communication from the 05573 from the Acting Director, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the Secretary (00REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Mailing Address of the Board of Veterans’ Appeals (RIN: 2900–AP71) received May 26, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104–121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868). Referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

June 3, 2016: Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker’s table as follows: Communication from the 05573 from the Acting Director, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the Secretary (00REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Mailing Address of the Board of Veterans’ Appeals (RIN: 2900–AP71) received May 26, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104–121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868). Referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

June 3, 2016: Petition 0067 Under clause 3 of rule XII, the following petition and papers were presented, as follows: By the speaker: A petition of the Council of the City of New York, NY, relative to Resolution No. 853, calling on Congress to pass, and the President to sign, H.R. 1217, also known as the Public Safety and Second Amendment Rights Protection Act of 2015, which closes loopholes in the current gun background check system. Referred jointly to the Committees on the Judiciary and Veterans’ Affairs.

June 14, 2016: Petition 0070, Under clause 3 of rule XII, the following petition and papers were presented, as follows: By the Speaker: A petition of Delaware County Board of Supervisors, NY, relative to Resolution No. 68, urging the Veterans Affairs Administration to streamline requirements in determining conditions for Non-VA Care when veterans are seeking emergency care. Referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

June 14, 2016: Memorial 0261, Under clause 3 of rule XII, a memorial of the following title was presented, as follows: By the Speaker: A memorial of the General Assembly of the State of Colorado, relative to Senate Resolution 16–002, to encourage the United States Congress to restore the presumption of service connection for Agent Orange exposure to United States veterans who served on the waters off the coast of the Republic of Vietnam. Referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

July 1, 2016: Memorial 0279, Under clause 3 of rule XII, a memorial of the following title was presented, as follows: By the Speaker: A memorial of the Legislature of the States of Arizona, relative to House Concurrent Memorial 2006, urging the United States Congress to adopt legislation similar to the Toxic Exposure Research Act of 2015. Referred jointly to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and Armed Services.

July 12, 2016: Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker’s table as follows: Communication 06020 from the Office Program Manager, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the Secretary (00REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s direct final rule—Authority to Solicit Gifts and Donations (RIN: 2900–AP75) received July 8, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104–121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868). Referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

July 21, 2016: Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker’s table as follows: Communication 06265 from the office Program Manager, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the Secretary (00REG), Depart-
ment of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Hospital Care and Medical Services for Camp Lejeune Veterans (RIN: 2900–AP59) received July 15, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104–121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868). Referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

July 21, 2016: Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker’s table as follows: Communication 06264 from the Office Program Manager, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the Secretary (00REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Prescriptions in Alaska and U.S. Territories and Possessions (RIN: 2900–AP42) received July 15, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104–121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868). Referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

September 6, 2016: Under Clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker’s table as follows: Communication 06648 from the Office Program Manager, Office of Regulation Policy and Management Staff, Office of the General Counsel (00REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Loan Guaranty: Delegation of Authority (RIN: 2900–AP77) received August 26, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104–121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868). Referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

September 6, 2016: Under Clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker’s table as follows: Communication 06649 from the President of the United States, transmitting a statement supporting many of the recommendations and the underlying objectives offered by the Commission on Care in the final report transmitted on July 6, 2016, pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 1701 note; Public Law 113–146, Sec. 202(g)(2); (128 Stat. 1776). Referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and ordered to be printed September 6, 2016.

September 6, 2016: Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker’s table as follows: Communication 06684 from the Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting the Third Quarterly Report for FY 2016 on the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994, pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 4332(b)(1); Public Law 103–353, Sec. 2(a) (as added by Public Law 110–389, Sec. 312(c)); (122 Stat. 4165). Referred jointly to the Committees on the Judiciary and Veterans’ Affairs.

September 6, 2016: Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker’s table as follows: communication 06647 from the Office Program Manager, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel (00REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s interim final rule—Veterans Employment Pay for Success Grant Program (RIN: 2900–AP72) received August 15, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104–121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868). Referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

September 7, 2016: Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker’s table as follows: communication 06691 from the Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting a letter reporting a violation of the Antideficiency Act, in the Medical Support and Compliance account.
September 13, 2016: Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker’s table as follows: Communication 06817 from the Office Program Manager, Office of the Secretary (00REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s final rule—Telephone Enrollment in the VA Healthcare System (RIN: 2900–AP68) received September 9, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104–121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868). Referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

September 26, 2016: Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker’s table as follows: Communication 06979 from the Office of Program Manager, Office of the General Counsel (00REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s direct final rule—Authority to Solicit Gifts and Donations (RIN: 2900–AP75) received September 22, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104–121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868). Referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

September 26, 2016: Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker’s table as follows: Communication 06978 from the Office Program Manager, Office of Regulation Policy Management, Office of the Secretary (00REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s withdrawal of proposed rule—Authority to Solicit Gifts and Donations (RIN: 2900–AP74) received September 22, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104–121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868). Referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

September 27, 2016: Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker’s table as follows: Communication 07007 from the Chief Impact Analyst, ORPM, Office of the General Counsel (02REG), VHA, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department’s interim final rule—Telephone enrollment in the VA healthcare system (RIN: 2900–AP68) received September 23, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104–121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868). Referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

September 28, 2016: Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker’s table as follows: Communication 07047 from the Deputy Secretary and Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense, transmitting the Departments’ FY 2015 Annual Joint Report, pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 8111 (f) (1); Public Law 96–22, Sec. 301 (a) (as added by Public Law 97–174, Sec. 3 (a) (3)); (96 Stat. 73). Referred jointly to the Committees on Armed Services and Veterans’ Affairs.

November 14, 2016: 172–The 2016 National Convention Proceedings of Disabled American Veterans Communication 07431 from the National Adjutant, Chief Executive Officer, the Disabled American Veterans, held in Atlanta Georgia, July 31–August 3, 2016. Referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and ordered to be printed.
November 14, 2016: Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker’s table as follows: Communication 07455 from the Policy Officer, Army National Military Cemeteries, Department of the Army, Department of Defense transmitting the Department’s final rule—Army National Military Cemeteries [Docket No.:USA–2015–HQ–0046] (RIN: 0702–AA60) received October 5, 2016. Referred jointly to the Committees on Armed Services and Veterans’ Affairs.

November 14, 2016: Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker’s table as follows: Communication 07463 from the Assistant General, Department of Justice transmitting the Attorney General’s Fourth Quarterly Report for FY 2016 on the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994. Referred jointly to the Committees on the Judiciary and Veterans’ Affairs.

November 14, 2016: Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker’s table as follows: Communication 07430 from the Office Program Manager, Office of Regulation Policy and Management (00REG), Office of the Secretary (00REG), Department of Veterans Affairs transmitting the Department’s interim final rule—Extension of the Presumptive Period for Compensation for Gulf War Veterans (RIN: 2900–AP84) received October 21, 2016. Referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

November 14, 2016: Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker’s table as follows: Communication 07429 from the Office Program Manager, Office of Regulation Policy and Management (00REG), Office of the Secretary (00REG), Department of Veterans Affairs transmitting the Department’s final rule—Repayment by VA of Educational Loans for Certain Psychiatrists (RIN: 2900–AP57) received September 30, 2016. Referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.