

**Union Calendar No. 887**

115th Congress, 2d Session - - - - - House Report 115-1120

REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES  
OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
OF THE  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
DURING THE  
ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS  
PURSUANT TO  
CLAUSE 1(d) RULE XI OF THE RULES OF THE HOUSE  
OF REPRESENTATIVES



JANUARY 2, 2019.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on  
the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

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**LETTER OF SUBMITTAL**

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS,  
*Washington, DC, January 2, 2019.*

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 115th 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,

DAVID P. ROE, M.D.,  
*Chairman.*



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115TH CONGRESS }  
2d Session } HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES { REPORT  
115-1120

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### REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTA- TIVES DURING THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CON- GRESS

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Mr. ROE of Tennessee, from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs,  
pursuant to Clause 1(d) Rule XI, submitted the following

### R E P O R T

#### ACTIVITIES OF THE FULL COMMITTEE

##### *First Session*

##### LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

##### **Business Meeting—Formal Organization of the 115th Con- gress**

On January 21, 2017, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a meeting to formally organize for the 115th Congress. In this meeting the Committee adopted a resolution for the Committee rules for the 115th Congress, a resolution to approve the ratios of the Subcommittees, a resolution to approve the Vice-Chairman and Majority Subcommittee Chairmen, a resolution to approve the Ranking Members of the Subcommittees, a resolution to approve the Majority Membership of the Subcommittees, a resolution to approve the Minority Membership of the Subcommittees, a resolution to approve the Committee staff, and a resolution to adopt the Committee Oversight Agenda for the 115th Congress.

The major oversight agenda items included: effectiveness of transition assistance program (TAP), accountability and civil service reform, education training and GI benefits, appeals modernization, national cemeteries, care in the community, capitol asset review, mental health and suicide prevention, whistleblowers, and elec-

tronic health records.<sup>1</sup> A summary of the actions taken related to the oversight plan are detailed in this report.

**Business Meeting—Resolution To Assign Congressman Kilili Sablan, Congresswoman Esty, and Congressman Scott Peters to HVAC Subcommittees**

On February 15, 2018, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs met to formally approve Congresswoman Elizabeth Esty, Congressman Kilili Sablan, and Congressman Scott Peters be assigned to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The Committee also formally assigned Congresswoman Elizabeth Esty to be the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs.

**Legislative Hearing—Joint Hearing With the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs—HVAC/SVAC Joint Hearing To Receive the Legislative Presentation of the Disabled American Veterans**

On February 28, 2017, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a joint hearing with the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs to receive the legislative presentation of the Disabled American Veterans. Testimony was provided by David W. Riley, National Commander, on behalf of Jim Marszalek, National Service Director; Joy J. Ilem, National Legislative Director; Garry J. Augustine Executive Director, Washington Headquarters; J. Marc Burgess, National Adjutant; Barry A. Jesinoski, Executive Director, National Headquarters; John Kleindienst, National Director of Voluntary Service; Jeffrey C. Hall, National Director of Employment; and Frances Costa, DAV Auxiliary National Commander. This hearing was hosted by the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs and therefore does not have a House Serial Number.

**Legislative Hearing—Joint Hearing With the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs—Joint Hearing To Receive the Legislative Presentation of the American Legion**

On March 1, 2017, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a joint hearing with the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs to receive the legislative presentation of The American Legion. Testimony was provided by Charles Schmidt, National Commander; James Oxford, Chairman, National Legislative Commission; Ralph Bozella, Chairman, National Veterans Affairs Rehabilitation Commission; Matthew Shuman, Director, National Legislative Division; Louis Celli, Jr., Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division; Paul Dillard, Chairman, Veterans Employment & Education Commission; Joseph Sharpe, Jr., Director, Veterans Employment & Education Division. This hearing was hosted by the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs and therefore does not have a House Serial Number.

**Markup—H.R. 369, H.R. 1181, H.R. 1259, H.R. 1367, AND H.R. 1379.**

On March 8, 2017, the Full Committee met and marked up H.R. 369, as amended, to eliminate the sunset of the Veterans Choice

<sup>1</sup> The Committee's 115th Oversight Plan is printed in House Report 115-69.



Program, and for other purposes, introduced by Chairman David P. Roe of Tennessee; H.R. 1181, Veterans 2nd Amendment Protection Act, introduced by Chairman David P. Roe of Tennessee; H.R. 1259, as amended, VA Accountability First Act of 2017, introduced by Chairman David P. Roe of Tennessee; H.R. 1367, to improve the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire and retain physicians and other employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, introduced by Representative Brad Wenstrup of Ohio; and H.R. 1379, to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the entitlement to educational assistance under the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs for members of the Armed Forces awarded the Purple Heart, introduced by Representative Scott Peters of California.

On March 8, 2017, an amendment to H.R. 369 was offered by Ranking Member Tim Walz of Minnesota, and was agreed to by voice vote. H.R. 369, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably reported to the Full House by voice vote.

On March 8, 2017, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1181 was offered by Representative Elizabeth Esty of Connecticut, and was not adopted by Full Committee voice vote. H.R. 1181 passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably reported to the Full House by voice vote.

On March 8, 2017, an amendment to H.R. 1259 was offered by Ranking member Tim Walz of Minnesota, and was not adopted by Full Committee voice vote. An amendment in the nature of substitute to H.R. 1259 was offered by Representative Ann McLane Kuster of New Hampshire, and was not adopted by Full Committee voice vote. An amendment in the nature of substitute to H.R. 1259 was introduced by Representative Mark Takano of California, and was not adopted by Full Committee voice vote. H.R. 1259 passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably reported to the Full House by voice vote.

On March 8, 2017, H.R. 1367 passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably reported to the Full House by voice vote.

On March 8, 2017, an amendment in the nature of substitute to H.R. 1379 was introduced by Representative Scott Peters of California, and was agreed to by voice vote. H.R. 1379, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably reported to the Full House by voice vote.

**Legislative Hearing—Joint Hearing with the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs—HVAC/SVAC Hearing to Receive the Legislative Presentations From Multiple Veterans Service Organizations (PVA, AUSN, AMVETS, VVA, NCOA, GSW, NASDVA, WWP, NGAUS)**

On March 9, 2017, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a joint hearing with the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs to receive the legislative presentations from multiple veteran service organizations (PVA, AUSN, AMVETS, VVA, NCOA, GSW, NASDVA, WWP, NGAUS). This hearing was hosted by the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs and therefore does not have a House Serial Number. Testimony was provided by: Mr. Al Kovach, Jr., National President, Paralyzed Veterans of America; RADM Garry E. Hall,

USN (Ret.), National Executive Director, Association of the United States Navy; Mr. Harold Chapman, National Commander, AMVETS (American Veterans); Mr. John Rowan, National President, Vietnam Veterans of America; MCPOCG Vincent Patton, III, (Ret.), President and National Commander, Non Commissioned Officer Association; Ms. Misty Brammer, Gold Star Wives of America; Mr. Randy Reeves, President, National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs; Lt. Gen. Michael S. Linnington (Ret.), Chief Executive Officer, Wounded Warrior Project; MG Gus Hargett, USA (Ret.), President, National Guard Association of the United States. This hearing was hosted by the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs and therefore does not have a House Serial Number.

**Legislative Hearing—Joint Hearing of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees To Receive the Legislative Presentations From JWV, FRA, AFSA, MOPH, American Ex-POW, BVA, TREA, MOAA and IAVA**

On March 22, 2017 the Full Committee held a joint hearing with the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs to receive testimony from multiple veterans' organizations (JWV, FRA, AFSA, MOPH, American Ex-POW, BVA, TREA, MOAA, and IAVA) on their 2017 legislative priorities.

Testimony was provided by Col. Carl A. Singer, USA Retired, National Commander, Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America; Donald Larson, National President, Fleet Reserve Association; Mark Stevenson, Chief Operating Officer, Air Force Sergeants Association; Hershel Gober, National Commander, Military Order of the Purple Heart; Charles, Susino, Jr., National Commander, American Ex-Prisoners of War Organization; Mr. Dale Stamper, National President, Blinded Veterans Association; John I. Adams, National President, The Retired Enlisted Association; Aniel Szymanski, Government Relations Director for Veterans Benefits, Military Officers Association of America; and Allison Jaslow, Chief of Staff, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. This hearing was hosted by the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs and therefore does not have a House Serial Number.

**Legislative Hearing—On a Draft Bill Entitled “Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017”**

On Tuesday, May 2, 2017, the Full Committee held a legislative hearing on a draft bill entitled “Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017”.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by The Honorable Dina Titus, U.S. House of Representatives.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. David C. Spickler, Executive in Charge/Acting Vice Chairman, Board of Veterans' Appeals, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Spickler was accompanied by Mr. David R. McLenachen, Director, Appeals Management Office, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Additionally, testimony was provided by Mr. Louis J. Celli, Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Mr. Jim Marszalek, National Service Director, Disabled American Veterans; and, Mr.

Ryan M. Gallucci, Director, National Veterans Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

A Statement for the Record was provided by Military Officers Association of America, National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs, National Organization of Veterans' Advocates, National Veterans Legal Services Program, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Military-Veterans Advocacy Inc., and Vietnam Veterans of America. See "Legislative Hearing on the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017" Serial No. 115-12

**Markup—H.R. 91, H.R. 467, H.R. 1005, H.R. 1162, H.R. 1329 as Amended, ANS to H.R. 1461, H.R. 1545, and H.R. 1662, H.R. 1725 as Amended, and H.R. 2288**

On May 17, 2017, the Full Committee met and marked up H.R. 91, the Building Supportive Networks for Women Veterans Act, introduced by Representative Julia Brownley of California; H.R. 467, the VA Scheduling Accountability Act, introduced by Representative Jackie Walorski of Indiana; H.R. 1005, to improve the provision of adult day health care service for veterans, introduced by Representative Lee Zeldin of New York; H.R. 1162, No Hero Left Untreated Act, introduced by Representative Stephen Knight of California; H.R. 1329, Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2017, introduced by Representative Mike Bost of Illinois; amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1461, VET Protection Act of 2017, introduced by Representative Mark Takano of California; H.R. 1545, the VA Prescription Data Accountability Act of 2017, introduced by Representative Ann McLane Kuster of New Hampshire; H.R. 1662, to prohibit smoking in any VHA facility, introduced by Representative Brad Wenstrup of Ohio; H.R. 1725, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit certain reports relating to medical evidence submitted in support of claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary, introduced by Representative Timothy Walz of Minnesota; H.R. 2288, Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017, introduced by Representative Mike Bost of Illinois.

On May 17, 2017, H.R. 91; H.R. 467; H.R. 1005; H.R. 1162; H.R. 1329, as amended; H.R. 1461, as amended; H.R. 1545; H.R. 1662; H.R. 1725, as amended; and H.R. 2288 passed the Full Committee by voice vote and were favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote.

**Roundtable Discussion—Improving Access, Quality, and Efficiency: Exploring Organizational Changes for the Veterans Health Administration**

On June 15, 2017, the Full Committee hosted a roundtable discussion entitled, "Improving Access, Quality, and Efficiency: Exploring Organizational Changes for the Veterans Health Administration."

**Legislative Hearing—Legislative Hearing on H.R. 3218, the Harry W. Colmery Veteran Educational Assistance Act of 2017**

On July 17, 2017, the Full Committee met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on H.R. 3218, the Harry W. Colmery Veteran Educational Assistance Act of 2017.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: Representative Kevin McCarthy of California; Representative Mark Takano of California; Representative Gus Bilirakis of Florida, Representative Scott Peters of California; Representative Mike Coffman of Colorado, Representative Brad Wenstrup of Ohio; Representative John Rutherford of Florida; Representative Jim Banks of Indiana; Representative Luke Messer of Indiana; Representative Paul Cook of California.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: Mr. Curtis L. Coy, Deputy Under Secretary, Economic Opportunity, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs who was accompanied by Mr. James Ruhlman, Assistant Director for Policy and Procedures, Education Service, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Patrick D. Murray, Associate Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Mr. William Hubbard, Vice President of Government Affairs, Student Veterans of America; Mr. John Kamin, Assistant Director, Veteran Employment and Education, The American Legion; and Ms. Ashlynn Haycock, Senior Coordinator, Education Support Services, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors. See, “Legislative hearing on H.R. 3218, the Harry W. Colmery Veteran Educational Assistance Act of 2017,” Serial No. 115–25

**Roundtable Discussion—The Opioid Crisis: A Roundtable Discussion on Impacts, Challenges, and Solutions for Veterans**

On July 18, 2017, the Full Committee hosted a roundtable discussion entitled, “The Opioid Crisis: A Roundtable Discussion on Impacts, Challenges, and Solutions for Veterans.”

**Markup—H.R. 95, H.R. 282, ANS to H.R. 918, H.R. 918, ANS to H.R. 1058, H.R. 1058, H.R. 1690 as Amended, H.R. 2006, H.R. 2749, H.R. 2772, H.R. 2781, ANS to H.R. 3218, and H.R. 3262.**

On July 19, 2017, the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs held a markup of the following legislation: H.R. 95, the Veterans Access to Child Care Act, introduced by Representative Julia Brownley of California; H.R. 282, Military Residency Choice Act, introduced by Representative Elise Stefanik of New York; H.R. 918, the Veteran Urgent Access to Mental Healthcare Act, introduced by Representative Mike Coffman of Colorado; H.R. 1058, the VA Provider Equity, introduced by Representative Brad Wenstrup of Ohio; H.R. 1690, as amended, Department of Veterans Affairs Bonus Transparency Act, introduced by Representative Claudia Tenney of New York; H.R. 2006, VA Procurement Efficiency and Transparency Act, introduced by Representative Mike Coffman of Colorado; H.R. 2749, Protecting Business Opportunities for Veterans Act of 2017, introduced by Representative Jack Bergman of Michigan; H.R. 2772, SEA Act of 2018, introduced by Representative Scott Taylor of Virginia; H.R. 2781, Ensuring Veteran Enterprise Participation in Strategic Sourcing Act, introduced by Representative Neal Dunn of Florida; H.R. 3218, Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017, introduced by Representative Jodey Arrington of Texas; and H.R. 3262, as amended, the Grow Our Own Direc-

tive: Physician Assistant Employment and Education Act of 2017, introduced by Representative Ann McLane Kuster.

On July 19, 2017, An amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 95 was offered by Representative Julia Brownley of California and was agreed to by voice vote. H.R. 95, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote.

On July 19, 2017, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 918 was offered Representative Mike Coffman of Colorado. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 918 was offered by Representative Beto O'Rourke of Texas and was agreed to by voice vote. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 918 was offered by Representative Jenniffer González-Colón of Puerto Rico and was agreed to by voice vote. The amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended, was agreed to by voice vote. H.R. 918, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote.

On July 19, 2017, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1058 was offered by Representative Brad Wenstrup of Ohio. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1058 was offered by Representative Brad Wenstrup of Ohio and was agreed to by voice vote. The amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended, was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 1058, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote.

On July 19, 2017, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3218 was offered by Representative Phil Roe of Tennessee. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3218 was offered by Representative Jodey Arrington of Texas and was agreed to by voice vote. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3218 was offered by Representative Kathleen Rice of New York and was agreed to by voice vote. H.R. 3218, as amended, was forwarded favorably to the Full House by voice vote.

#### **Roundtable—Veteran Care in Rural Areas: Increasing Access Through Choice and Capacity Improvement**

On August 10, 2017, the Full Committee conducted a roundtable discussion in Duluth, Minnesota, entitled, “Veteran Care in Rural Areas: Increasing Access through Choice and Capacity Improvement.”

#### **Roundtable Discussion—VA Capital Asset Review**

On September 7, 2017, the Full Committee hosted a roundtable discussion entitled, “Roundtable Discussion on VA Capital Asset Review.”

#### **Roundtable Discussion—Roundtable Discussion on Care in the Community**

On October 3, 2017, The Full Committee hosted a roundtable discussion entitled, “Roundtable Discussion on Care in the Community.”

**Legislative Hearing—Draft Legislation, the Asset and Infrastructure Review Act of 2017, and H.R. 2773, To Authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs To Sell Pershing Hall**

On October 12, 2017, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on draft legislation, the Asset and Infrastructure Review—*or*, AIR—Act of 2017, and H.R. 2773, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to sell Pershing Hall.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Representative Mike Coffman of Colorado.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: Joy J. Ilem, National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Louis J. Celli Jr., Director, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Carl Blake, Associate Executive Director of Government Relations, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Carlos Fuentes, Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Dave Wise, Director, Physical Infrastructure Team, U.S. Government Accountability Office; and Regan L. Crump MSN, DrPH, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Policy and Planning, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, who was accompanied by James M. Sullivan, Director, Office of Asset Enterprise Management, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, "Draft legislation, the Asset and Infrastructure Review Act of 2017, and H.R. 2773, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to sell Pershing Hall," Serial No. 115–XX.<sup>2</sup>

**Markup—H.R. 1066, H.R. 3122, H.R. 3561, H.R. 3562, H.R. 3656, H.R. 3657**

On October 12, 2017, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a markup on the following legislation: H.R. 1066, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report regarding the organizational structure of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, introduced by Representative Derek Kilmer of Washington; H.R. 3122, to protect individuals who are eligible for increased pension under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on the basis of need of regular aid and attendance from dishonest, predatory, or otherwise unlawful practices, and for other purpose, introduced by Representative Matt Cartwright of Pennsylvania; H.R. 3561, to amend title 38, United States Code, to permit appraisers approved by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make appraisals for purposes of chapter 37 of such title based on inspections performed by third parties, introduced by Representative Jodey Arrington of Texas; H.R. 3562, to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish assistance for adaptations of residences of veterans in rehabilitation programs under chapter 31 of such title, and for other purposes, introduced by Representative Jodey Arrington of Texas; H.R. 3656, to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for a consistent eligibility date for provision of Department of Vet-

<sup>2</sup>Hearing serial numbers marked "XX" indicate GPO has not published the final hearing documents.

erans Affairs memorial headstones and markers for eligible spouses and dependent children of veterans whose remains are unavailable, introduced by Representative Jim Banks of Indiana; H.R. 3657, to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide headstones and markers for the graves of spouses and children of veterans who are buried in tribal cemeteries, introduced by Representative Bruce Poliquin of Maine.

On October 12, 2017, H.R. 1066 was agreed to via voice vote and was reported to the Full House favorably.

On October 12, 2017, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3122 was offered by Representative Elizabeth Esty and was agreed to via voice vote. H.R. 3122, as amended, was passed via voice vote and reported to the Full House favorably.

On October 12, 2017, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3561 was offered by Representative Jodey Arrington from Texas and was agreed to via voice vote. H.R. 3561, as amended, was passed via voice vote and reported to the Full House favorably.

On October 12, 2017, H.R. 3562 was agreed to via voice vote and was reported to the Full House favorably.

On October 12, 2017, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3656 was offered by Representative Jim Banks of Indiana and was agreed to via voice vote. H.R. 3656, as amended, was passed via voice vote and was reported to the Full House favorably.

On October 12, 2017, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3657 was offered by Representative Bruce Poliquin of Maine and was agreed to via voice vote. H.R. 3657, as amended, was passed via voice vote and was reported to the Full House favorably.

#### **Roundtable—International Falls, Minnesota**

On October 20, 2017, Ranking Member Tim Walz, Representative Rick Nolan and Minority staff conducted a Roundtable with veterans in International Falls, MN to discuss issues unique to veterans living in a rural area of the northern Midwest. The roundtable was an opportunity for veterans to share their views on (1) a lack of health care providers in rural communities, (2) a division between local VSO staff and national leaders, (3) a desire to gain access to veteran-centric healthcare in their communities.

#### **Legislative Hearing—Draft Legislation To Establish a Permanent [Veterans Choice Program]; Draft Legislation To Modify VA's Authority To Enter Into Agreements With State Homes To Provide Nursing Home Care to Veterans, To Direct the Secretary To Carry Out a Program To Increase the Number of Graduate Medical Education Residency Positions, and for Other Purposes; the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) Legislative Proposal, the Veteran Coordinated Access and Rewarding Experiences (CARE) Act; H.R. 1133; H.R. 2123; H.R. 2601; and, H.R. 3642.**

On October 24, 2017, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on: draft legislation to establish a permanent [Veterans Choice Program]; draft legislation

to modify VA's authority to enter into agreements with State homes to provide nursing home care to veterans, to direct the Secretary to carry out a program to increase the number of graduate medical education residency positions, and for other purposes; the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) legislative proposal, the Veteran Coordinated Access and Rewarding Experiences (CARE) Act; H.R. 1133; H.R. 2123; H.R. 2601; and H.R. 3642.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: Representative Jim Banks of Indiana; Representative Mike Gallagher of Wisconsin; Representative John R. Carter of Texas; Representative Glenn Thompson of Pennsylvania; Representative Neal P. Dunn of Florida; and Representative Andy Barr of Kentucky.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: the Honorable David J. Shulkin, M.D., Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, who was accompanied by Carolyn Clancy M.D., Executive in Charge, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and Laurie Zephyrin M.D., MPH, MBA, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Community Care, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by: Adrian M. Atizado, Deputy National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Roscoe G. Butler, Deputy Director for Health Care, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; and Kayda Keleher, Associate Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. See, "draft legislation to establish a permanent [Veterans Choice Program]; draft legislation to modify VA's authority to enter into agreements with State homes to provide nursing home care to veterans, to direct the Secretary to carry out a program to increase the number of graduate medical education residency positions, and for other purposes; the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) legislative proposal, the Veteran Coordinated Access and Rewarding Experiences (CARE) Act; H.R. 1133; H.R. 2123; H.R. 2601; and, H.R. 3642.," Serial No. 115–XX.

**Markup—H.R. 299, Amendment to the ANS to H.R. 299, H.R. 1133, ANS to H.R. 1133, H.R. 1900, ANS to H.R. 1900, H.R. 2123, H.R. 2601, ANS to H.R. 2601, H.R. 3634, H.R. 3705, ANS to H.R. 3705, H.R. 3949, H.R. 4173, ANS to H.R. 4173**

On November 2, 2017, the Full Committee met and marked up the following legislation: H.R. 299, to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify presumptions relating to the exposure of certain veterans who served in the vicinity of the Republic of Vietnam, and for other purposes, introduced by Representative David Valadao of California; H.R. 1133, the Veterans Transplant Coverage Act of 2017, introduced by Representative John Carter of Texas; H.R. 1900, to designate the Veterans Memorial and Museum in Columbus, Ohio, as the National Veterans Memorial and Museum, and for other purposes, offered by Representative Steve Stivers of Ohio; H.R. 2123, the Veterans E-Health and Telemedicine Support Act of 2017, introduced by Representative Glenn Thompson of Pennsylvania; H.R. 2601, the Veterans Increased Choice for Transplanted Organs and Recovery Act of 2017, introduced by Representative Neal Dunn of Florida; H.R. 3634, to amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure that individuals may access documentation



verifying the monthly housing stipend paid to the individual under the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, introduced by Representative James Himes of Connecticut; H.R. 3705, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to require the use of certified mail and plain language in certain debt collection activities, introduced by Representative Chellie Pingree of Maine; H.R. 3949, as amended, To amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the designation of State approving agencies for multi-State apprenticeship programs for purposes of the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, introduced by Representative Ro Khanna of California; H.R. 4173, the Veterans Crisis Line Study Act of 2017, introduced by Representative Jim Banks of Indiana; and an amendment to H.R. 4173 offered by Jim Banks of Indiana.

On November 2, 2017, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 299 was offered by Representative Phil Roe of Tennessee. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 299 was offered by Representative Timothy Walz of Minnesota and agreed to via voice vote. H.R. 299, as amended, was passed by the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote.

On November 2, 2017, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1133 was offered by Representative Brad Wenstrup of Ohio and agreed to by voice vote. H.R. 1133, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote.

On November 2, 2017, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1133 offered by Representative Brad Wenstrup of Ohio was agreed to via voice vote. H.R. 1133, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote.

On November 2, 2017, amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1900 offered by Representative Phil Roe of Tennessee. Amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1900 offered by Representative Timothy Walz of Minnesota was agreed to via voice vote. H.R. 1900, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote.

On November 2, 2017, H.R. 2123 passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote.

On November 2, 2017, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 2601 was offered by Representative Neal Dunn of Florida and agreed to by voice vote. H.R. 2601, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote.

On November 2, 2017, H.R. 3634 passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote.

On November 2, 2017, H.R. 3705 passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote. Amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3705 offered by Representative Elizabeth Esty of Connecticut was passed via voice vote.

On November 2, 2017, H.R. 3949, as amended, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote.

On November 2, 2017, an amendment to H.R. 4173 was offered by Representative Jim Banks and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 4173, as amended, passed the Full House by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote.

**Markup—H.R. 4243, the VA Asset and Infrastructure Review (AIR) Act**

On November 8, 2017, the Committee on Veterans Affairs met in open session to markup H.R. 4243, the VA Asset and Infrastructure Review (AIR) Act, introduced by Chairman David Roe of Tennessee.

On November 8, 2017, an amendment to H.R. 4243, was offered by Representative Kilili Sablan of the Northern Mariana Islands and was agreed to by voice vote.

On November 8, 2017, an amendment to H.R. 4243 was offered and then withdrawn by Representative Ann Kuster from New Hampshire.

On November 8, 2017, an amendment to H.R. 4243 was offered and then withdrawn by Representative Julia Brownley of California.

On November 8, 2017, H.R. 4243, as amended, passed the Full Committee by a recorded vote of 13 yeas and 10 nays. H.R. 4243, as amended, and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by voice vote.

**Markup—H.R. 4242, the VA Care in the Community Act**

On December 19, 2017, the Committee on Veterans Affairs met in open session to markup H.R. 4242, the VA Care in the Community Act, introduced by Chairman David Roe of Tennessee.

On December 19, 2017, the following amendments to H.R. 4242 were considered en bloc and passed by voice vote: an amendment offered by Representative John Rutherford of Florida; an amendment offered by Representative Neal Dunn of Florida; an amendment offered by Representative Mike Coffman of Colorado; an amendment offered by Representative Jenniffer González-Colón of Puerto Rico; an amendment offered by Representative Julia Brownley of California; and an amendment offered by Representative Gus Bilirakis of Florida.

On December 19, 2017, an amendment was offered and then withdrawn by Representative Elizabeth Esty of Connecticut.

On December 19, 2017, an amendment was offered and then withdrawn by Representative Elizabeth Esty of Connecticut.

On December 19, 2017, an amendment was offered by Representative David P. Roe of Tennessee, the Chairman of the full Committee, was agreed to by voice vote.

On December 19, 2017, an amendment was offered and then withdrawn by Representative David P. Roe of Tennessee, the Chairman of the full Committee.

On December 19, 2017, an amendment was offered by Representative David P. Roe of Tennessee, the Chairman of the full Committee, was agreed to by voice vote.

On December 19, 2017, amendment was offered by Representative Mark Takano of California and was not agreed to by voice vote.

On December 19, 2017, amendment was offered by Representative Mark Takano of California and was not agreed to by a recorded vote of 9 yeas to 14 noes.

On December 19, 2017, an amendment was offered by Representative Mark Takano of California was not agreed to by voice vote.

On December 19, 2017, an amendment offered by Representative Ann Kuster of New Hampshire was agreed to by voice vote.

On December 19, 2017, an amendment was offered by Representative Julia Brownley of California and was not agreed to by a recorded vote of 9 yeas to 14 noes.

On December 19, 2017, an amendment in the nature of a substitute was offered by Representative Tim Walz of Minnesota, the Ranking Member of full Committee. The amendment in the nature of a substitute was not agreed to by a recorded vote of 9 yeas to 14 noes.

On December 19, 2017, H.R. 4242, as amended, passed the Full Committee by a recorded vote of 14 yeas and 9 nays. H.R. 4242, as amended, and was favorably forwarded to the Full House by recorded vote of 14 yeas and 9 noes.

#### *Second Session*

#### **Legislative Hearing—Joint Hearing of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees To Receive the Legislative Presentation of the Disabled American Veterans**

On February 27, 2018, the Full Committee held a joint hearing with the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs to receive testimony from the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) on the organization's 2018 legislative priorities.

Testimony was provided by the following members of DAV: Jim Marszalek, National Service Director; Joy J. Ilem, National Legislative Director; Garry J. Augustine, Executive Director, Washington Headquarters; J. Marc Burgess, National Adjutant; Barry A. Jesinoski, Executive Director, National Headquarters; John Kleindienst, National Director of Voluntary Service; Jeffrey C. Hall, National Director of Employment; and William Johniken, DAV Auxiliary National Commander. This hearing was hosted by the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs and therefore does not have a House Serial Number. This hearing was hosted by the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs and therefore does not have a House Serial Number.

#### **Legislative Hearing—Joint Hearing of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees To Receive the Legislative Presentation of the American Legion**

On February 28, 2018, the Full Committee participated in a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to receive testimony from The American Legion on its 2018 Legislative Priorities.

Testimony was provided by: Denise H. Rohan, National Commander, who was accompanied by: Paul Dillard, Chairman, National Legislative Commission; Ralph Bozella, Chairman, National

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission; Matthew Shuman, Director, National Legislative Division; Louis Celli, Jr., Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division; Randall Fisher, Chairman, Veterans Employment & Education Commission; and Joseph Sharpe, Director, Veterans Employment & Education Division. This hearing was hosted by the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs and therefore does not have a House Serial Number.

**Legislative Hearing—Joint Hearing of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees to Receive the Legislative Presentations From PVA, AMVETS, VVA, AXPOW, IAVA, AUSN, WWP, NGAUS, and NCOA**

On March 6, 2018, the Full Committee held a joint hearing with the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs to receive testimony from Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), American Veterans (AMVETS), Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), American Ex-Prisoners of War (AXPOW), Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), Association of the United States Navy (AUSN), Wounded Warrior Project (WWP), National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS), and Non Commissioned Officers Association (NCOA) on the their 2018 legislative priorities.

Testimony was provided by David Zurfluh, National President, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Marion Polk, National Commander, American Veterans; John Rowan, National President, Vietnam Veterans of America; Charles Susino, Jr., National Commander, American Ex-Prisoners of War; Melissa Bryant, Chief Policy Officer, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; RADM Christopher W. Cole, USN (Ret.), National Executive Director, Association of the United States Navy; René Bardorf, Senior Vice President, Government and Community Relations, Wounded Warrior Project; BG Roy Robinson (Ret.), President, National Guard Association of the United States; and MCPOCG Vincent Patton, III, (Ret.), President and National Commander, Non Commissioned Officers Association. This hearing was hosted by the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs and therefore does not have a House Serial Number.

**Roundtable Discussion on the Family Caregiver Program**

On March 6, 2018, the Full Committee held a roundtable discussion entitled, "Roundtable Discussion on the Family Caregiver Program."

**Legislative Hearing—Joint Hearing of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees to receive the Legislative Presentation of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States**

On March 7, 2018, the Full Committee held a joint hearing with the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs to receive testimony from the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by the following members of VFW: Ryan Gallucci, National Veterans Service Director; Keith Harman, National Commander in Chief; Richard Morrison, National Legislative Committee Chairman; Bob Wallace, Washington Office Executive Director. This hearing was hosted by the

Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs and therefore does not have a House Serial Number.

**Legislative Hearing—Joint Hearing of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees to Receive the Legislative Presentation of Multiple Veterans Service Organizations (FRA, JWV, AFSA, BVA, MOPH, NASDVA, MOAA, TREA, GSW)**

On March 14, 2018, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a joint hearing with the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs to receive testimony from: FRA, JWV, AFSA, BVA, MOPH, NASDVA, MOAA, TREA, GSW. On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: John Adams, National President, The Retired Enlisted Association; Verdie Bowen, President, National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs; René Campos, Senior Director for Government Relations, Military Officers Association of America; Cyndie Gibson, Gold Star Wives of America; Jeff Ledoux, International President, Air Force Sergeants Association; Paul L. Mimms, Vice President, Blinded Veterans Association; William Starkey, National President, Fleet Reserve Association; Neil Van Ess, National Commander, Military Order of the Purple Heart; and Paul D. Warner, PhD., National Commander, Jewish War Veterans. This hearing was hosted by the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs and therefore does not have a House Serial Number.

**Roundtable Discussion—VA's Implementation of Appeals Reform**

On March, 28, 2018, the Full Committee held a bipartisan roundtable discussion on the topic of VA's implementation of appeals reform, hosted by Chairman Phil Roe and Ranking Member Tim Walz. Attendance included Members of the Majority and Minority of the Committee, The Honorable Thomas G. Bowman, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; The Honorable Cheryl L. Mason, Chairman, Board of Veterans' Appeals, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. David R. McLenachen, Director, Appeals Management Office, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. David J. Barrans, Chief Counsel, Benefits Law Group, Office of General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Marcy Jacobs, Executive Director, Digital Services, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Elizabeth H. Curda, Director, Education, Workforce, and Income Security Team, U.S. Government Accountability Office; Mr. James T. Whitcomb, Senior Analyst, Education, Workforce, and Income Security Team, U.S. Government Accountability Office; Mr. Louis J. Celli, Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Mr. Denny Boller, National Service Director, AMVETS; Mr. Jim Marszalek, National Service Director, Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Mike McLaughlin, Legislative Liaison, National Association of County Veterans Service Officers; Ms. Diane Boyd Rauber, Executive Director, National Organization of Veterans' Advocates; Mr. Barton F. Stichman, Executive Director, National Veterans Legal Services Program; Mr. Steven Henry, Associate Legislative Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Ms. Lauren Barefoot, National Veterans Service Manager of Training and Quality Assurance, Veterans of

Foreign Wars; and, Ms. Kelsey Yoon, Director, Veterans Benefits Program, Vietnam Veterans of America. Serial No. 115–XX.

**Business Meeting—To Assign New Committee Member**

On May 8, 2018, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a business meeting to assign Representative Conor Lamb of Pennsylvania as a Democratic Member of the Committee and to the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations for the 115th Congress.

**Markup—H.R. 299; H.R. 1972; H.R. 2147; H.R. 3642; H.R. 3832; H.R. 4245; H.R. 4334; H.R. 4451, as amended; H.R. 4635; H.R. 4830, as amended; H.R. 4958; H.R. 5044; H.R. 5215; H.R. 5418; H.R. 5520; and H.R. 5674**

On May 8, 2018 the Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a markup of the following legislation: H.R. 299, Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2017; H.R. 1972, VA Billing Accountability Act; H.R. 2147, Veterans Treatment Court Improvement Act of 2018; H.R. 3642, Military SAVE Act; H.R. 3832, Veterans Opioid Abuse Prevention Act; H.R. 4245, Veterans' Electronic Health Record Modernization Oversight Act of 2017; H.R. 4334, Improving Oversight of Women Veterans' Care Act of 2018; H.R. 4451 AS AMENDED, Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Programs Reauthorization Act of 2018; H.R. 4635, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to increase the number of peer-to-peer counselors providing counseling for women veterans, and for other purposes.; H.R. 4830 AS AMENDED, SIT–REP Act; H.R. 4958, Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2018; H.R. 5044, Service-Disabled Veterans Small Business Continuation Act; H.R. 5215, Veterans Affairs Purchase Card Misuse Mitigation Act; H.R. 5418; H.R. 5520, Veterans Affairs Medical-Surgical Purchasing Stabilization Act; and H.R. 5674, VA MISSION Act of 2018.

On May 8, 2018, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1972 was offered by Representative John Rutherford of Florida and was agreed to by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 1972, as amended, to the Full House was offered by Ranking Member Tim Walz of Minnesota and agreed to by voice vote.

On May 8, 2018, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 2147 was offered by Representative Mike Coffman of Colorado and was agreed to by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 2147, as amended, to the House was offered by Ranking Member Tim Walz of Minnesota and agreed to by voice vote.

On May 8, 2018, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3642 was offered by Representative Bruce Poliquin of Maine and was agreed to by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 3642, as amended, to the House was offered by Ranking Member Tim Walz of Minnesota and agreed to by voice vote.

On May 8, 2018, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3832 was offered by Representative Neal Dunn of Florida and was agreed to by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 3832, as amended, to the House was offered by Ranking Member Tim Walz of Minnesota and agreed to by voice vote.

On May 8, 2018, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 4635 was offered by Representative Mike Coffman of Colorado and was agreed to by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward

H.R. 4635, as amended, to the House was offered by Ranking Member Tim Walz of Minnesota and agreed to by voice vote.

On May 8, 2018, an amendment to H.R. 5520 was offered by Representative Brad Wenstrup of Ohio and was agreed to by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 5520, as amended, to the House was offered by Ranking Member Tim Walz of Minnesota and agreed to by voice vote.

On May 8, 2018, amendment #1 to H.R. 5674 was offered by Representative Tim Walz of Minnesota and was not agreed to by a recorded vote of 8 ayes to 13 noes. Amendment #2 to H.R. 5674 was withdrawn by Ranking Member Tim Walz of Minnesota. Amendment #3 to H.R. 5674 was offered by Representative Tim Walz of Minnesota and was not agreed to by recorded vote of 8 ayes to 13 noes. An amendment to H.R. 5674 was offered by Representative Beto O'Rourke of Texas and was not agreed to by voice vote. Three amendments to H.R. 5674 were offered by Representative Julia Brownley of California and were withdrawn by Representative Julia Brownley of California. An amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5674 was offered by Representative Tim Walz of Minnesota and was not agreed to by a recorded vote of 8 ayes to 14 noes. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 5674 to the House was offered by Representative Bilirakis of Florida and agreed to by roll call vote of 20 ayes and 2 noes.

On May 8, 2018, H.R. 4245; H.R. 4334; H.R. 4451, as amended; H.R. 4830 as amended; H.R. 4958; H.R. 5044; H.R. 5215; H.R. 5418 were considered en bloc. A motion to favorably forward the en bloc bills to the House was offered by Ranking Member Tim Walz of Minnesota and agreed to by voice vote.

#### **Legislative Hearing—Member Day: Testimony and Proposals on the Department of Veterans Affairs**

On May 16, 2018, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a hearing allowing non-Committee members of the U.S. House of Representatives to testify on Department of Veterans' Affairs related issues in front of the Committee. On the first panel testimony was provided by Representative Brian Mast of Florida; Representative David Rouzer of North Carolina; Representative French Hill of Arkansas; Representative Markwayne Mullin of Oklahoma; and Representative Thomas Suozzi of New York. On the second panel, testimony was provided by Representative Jackie Walorski of Indiana; Representative Bruce Westerman of Arkansas; Representative Stacey Plaskett of the U.S. Virgin Islands; Representative Earl "Buddy" Carter of Georgia; and Representative Peter DeFazio of Oregon. On the third panel, testimony was provided by Representative James Renacci of Ohio; Representative Stephanie Murphy of Florida; and Representative Daniel Kildee of Michigan. On the fourth panel, testimony was provided by Representative Steve Stivers of Ohio; Representative Paul Ruiz of California; Representative Denny Heck of Washington; and Representative Bradley Schneider of Illinois. On the fifth panel, testimony was received by Mike Johnson of Louisiana; Representative Ron DeSantis of Florida; Representative Vicky Hartzler of Missouri; Representative Dina Titus of Nevada; Representative Andy Biggs of Arizona; and Representative Gergorio Kilili Camacho Sablen of the Northern Mariana Islands. On the sixth panel, testimony was provided by Rep-

representative Ruben Kihuen of Nevada; Representative Tom O'Halleran of Arizona; Representative Juan Vargas of California; and Representative Bill Flores of Texas. On the seventh panel, testimony was provided by Representative Dana Rohrabacher of California; Representative Peter Welch of Vermont; and Representative Seth Moulton of Massachusetts. On the eighth panel, testimony was provided by Representative Lee Zeldin of New York; Representative Dave Brat of Virginia; Representative Ted Lieu of California; Representative Jacky Rosen of Nevada; and Representative Greg Gianforte of Montana. On the ninth and final panel, testimony was provided by Representative Cathy McMorris Rogers of Washington; Representative Madeline Bordallo of Guam; and Representative Eddie Johnson of Texas. See, "Legislative Hearing: Member Day: Testimony and Proposals on the Department of Veterans Affairs," Serial No. 115–XX.

#### **Business Meeting—To Consider a Resolution Designating Republican Members of Subcommittees**

On May 22, 2018, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a Full Committee business meeting to add Representative Brian Mast of Florida as a Republican member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs as well as a member of the Subcommittees on Health and Economic Opportunity. The Committee also assigned Representative Neal Dunn of Florida to be Chairman of the Subcommittee on Health.

#### **Roundtable—Roundtable Discussion on Graduate Medical Education**

On June 13, 2018, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a roundtable to discuss to the VA Graduate Medical Education program, particularly regarding improving the (1) quality and oversight of graduate medical education training experiences within VA; (2) collaboration between VA and external partners, such as the academic affiliates and other federal entities; and (3) clinical access in rural and underserved areas; and (4) utilization and progress regarding the 1,500 GME slots authorized by the Choice Act, as well as prospective uses for the increased authorities contained within the VA MISSION Act.

The attendees at the roundtable were Karen Sanders, MD, Deputy Chief, Office of Academic Affiliations, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Kathleen Klink, MD, Acting Chief Officer, Office of Academic Affiliations, Department of Veterans Affairs; Monica Lypson, MD, Director Medical and Dental Education, Office of Academic Affiliations, Department of Veterans Affairs; Christopher Pelic, MD, Clinical Director of Graduate and Dental Education, Office of Academic Affiliations, Department of Veterans Affairs; Jane Carreiro, DO, Vice President for Health Affairs and Dean University of New England on behalf of the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine; Janis Orłowski, MD, MACP, Chief Health Care Officer on behalf of the Association of American Medical Colleges; Linda Thomas-Hemak, MD, President and CEO of the Wright Centers for Graduate Medical Education and Medical Group on behalf of the American Association of Teaching Health Centers; Rowen Zetterman, MD, MACP, MACG, Chair of the Board of the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education; Rich-



ard Thomas, MD, President, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences on behalf of the Department of Defense; Erin Fraher, PhD, MPP, Deputy Director, Cecil Sheps Center for Health Services Research, University of North Carolina; Veronica Mallett, MD, MMM, Senior Vice President for Health Affairs, Dean School of Medicine, Meharry Medical College; Jerry Kooiman, MPA, Assistant Dean for External Relations, Michigan State University College of Human Medicine; and Jonathan Espenschied, MD, Washington State University.

**Business Meeting—To Assign Representative Bill Flores of Texas to Subcommittees; Amend the Committee Rules to Establish a Subcommittee on Technology Modernization; Set the Membership Ratio of the Subcommittee; Assign a Chair and Ranking Member of the Subcommittee; Assign Majority and Minority Members of the Subcommittee; and for Other Purposes**

On July 12, 2018, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a business meeting to assign Bill Flores of Texas to the Subcommittees on Health and Economic Opportunity. The Committee Amended Rule 5 of Committee Rules. The Committee also established the Subcommittee on Technology Modernization, the Subcommittee's ratio, as well as majority and minority members of the Subcommittee on Technology Modernization. All proposed resolutions were adopted by the Full Committee via voice vote.

**Markup—H.R. 2409; H.R. 2787, as Amended; H.R. 5538; H.R. 5649; H.R. 5693; H.R. 5864; H.R. 5882; H.R. 5938, as Amended; H.R. 5974, as Amended; H.R. 6066, as Amended**

On July 12, 2018, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a markup of the following legislation: H.R. 2409, to allow servicemembers to terminate their cable, satellite television, and Internet access service contracts while deployed; H.R. 2787, as amended, Veterans-Specific Education for Tomorrow's Health Professionals Act; H.R. 5538, to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the inclusion of certain additional periods of active duty service for purposes of suspending charges to veterans' entitlement to educational assistance under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs during periods of suspended participation in vocational rehabilitation programs; H.R. 5649, Navy SEAL Chief Petty Officer William "Bill" Mulder (Ret.) Transition Improvement Act of 2018; H.R. 5693, as amended, Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act; H.R. 5864, VA Hospitals Establishing Leadership Performance Act; H.R. 5882, Gold Star Spouses Leasing Relief Act; H.R. 5938, as amended, Veterans Serving Veterans Act of 2018; H.R. 5974, as amended, VA COST SAVINGS Enhancements Act; and H.R. 6066, as amended to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the productivity of the management of Department of Veterans Affairs health care, and for other purposes.

On July 12, 2018, an amendment to H.R. 2787 was offered by Representative Mark Takano of California and was agreed to by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 2787, as amended, to the Full House was offered by Ranking Member Tim Walz of Minnesota and adopted by voice vote.

On July 12, 2018, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5693 was offered by Chairman Phil Roe of Tennessee and was agreed to by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 5693 as amended, to the House was offered by Ranking Member Walz of Minnesota and adopted by voice vote.

On July 12, 2018, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 6066, as amended, was offered by Representative Ann McLane Kuster of New Hampshire and was not agreed to by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 6066, as amended, to the House was offered by Vice Chairman Gus Bilirakis of Florida and adopted by voice vote.

On July 12, 2018, H.R. 2409; H.R. 5538; H.R. 5864; H.R. 5882; H.R. 5938, as amended; and H.R. 5974, as amended, were considered en bloc. A motion to favorably forward the en bloc bills to the House was offered by Ranking Member Tim Walz of Minnesota and adopted by voice vote.

## ACTIVITIES OF THE FULL COMMITTEE

### *First Session*

#### OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

### **Oversight Hearing—Assessing the VA IT Landscape: Progress and Challenges**

On February 7, 2017, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a hearing to assess the major information technology modernization projects and programs underway at VA, including an examination of their histories, objectives, cost and schedule goals, as well as the choices that must be made in the future regarding their directions.

Testimony was provided by Rob C. Thomas, II, Acting Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology and Chief Information Officer, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, accompanied by Jennifer S. Lee, M.D., Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Policy and Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Bradley Houston, Director, Office of Business Integration, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and David A. Powner, Director, IT Management Issues, U.S. Government Accountability Office. Statements for the record were provided by The American Legion; Blinded Veterans Association; Disabled American Veterans; and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. See, "Assessing the VA IT Landscape: Progress and Challenges," Serial No. 115-57.

### **Oversight Hearing—"Shaping the Future: Consolidating and Improving VA Community Care"**

On March 7, 2017, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a hearing titled "Shaping the Future: Consolidating and Improving VA Community Care". On the first panel, testimony was provided by the Honorable John McCain, U.S. Senator, Arizona. On the second panel, testimony was provided by the Honorable David J. Shulkin, M.D., Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs who was accompanied by Dr. Baligh Yehia, M.D., Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Community Care, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Testimony was also

provided by the Honorable Michael J. Missal, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs; and Randy Williamson, Director, Health Care, U.S. Government Accountability Office. Serial No. 115-5.

#### **Site Visit—Phoenix, Arizona & Ft. Huachuca, Arizona**

On March 30—April 3, 2017 Ranking Member Tim Walz and minority staff traveled to Phoenix, AZ to conduct an oversight visit of the Phoenix VA Medical Center, and Ft. Huachuca, AZ to observe the Department of Defense Soldier For Life and Transition Assistance Programs. At the Phoenix VA Medical Facility Representative Walz toured the facility, met with veterans and local facility leaders, received updates on the progress of the Choice Program implementation, and assessed the operations and management of the facility.

#### **Oversight Hearing—An Assessment of Ongoing Concerns at the Veterans Crisis Line**

On April 4, 2017, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing on the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Crisis Line (VCL).

Testimony was provided by: the Honorable Michael J. Missal, Inspector General, Office of the Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Kayda Keleher, Legislative Associate, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Melissa Bryant, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; and Steve Young, Deputy Under Secretary for Operations and Management, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, who was accompanied by Matthew Eitutis, Acting Executive Director, Office of Member Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, "An Assessment of Ongoing Concerns at the Veterans Crisis Line," Serial No. 115-9.

#### **Oversight Hearing—U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2018**

On May 24, 2017, the Full Committee met to discuss the Department of Veterans Affairs' Fiscal Year 2018 budget request to Congress.

Testimony was provided by: the Honorable David J. Shulkin M.D., Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, who was accompanied by Edward Murray, Acting Assistant Secretary for Management and Chief Financial Officer, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mark Yow, Chief Financial Officer, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; James Manker, Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Matthew Sullivan, Deputy Under Secretary for Finance and Planning and Chief Financial Officer, National Cemetery Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Rob Thomas, Acting Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, "U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2018," Serial No. 115-XX.

### **Oversight Hearing—Overcoming PTSD: Assessing VA’s Efforts To Promote Wellness and Healing**

On June 7, 2017, the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among veterans.

Testimony was provided by: Brendan O’Byrne, Veteran, United States Army; Sebastian Junger, Author, *Tribe: on Homecoming and Belonging*; Zach Iscol, Executive Director, Headstrong Project, and Veteran, United States Marine Corps; Paul Downs, Staff Member, Boulder Crest Retreat Team, Operation Warrior Wellness, The David Lynch Foundation, and Veteran, United States Marine Corps; and Harold Kudler M.D., Acting Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Patient Care Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, who was accompanied by Brad Flohr, Senior Advisor, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “Overcoming PTSD: Assessing VA’s Efforts to Promote Wellness and Healing,” Serial No. 115–16.

### **Oversight Hearing—Care Where It Counts: Assessing VA’s Capital Asset Needs**

On July 12, 2017, the Committee on Veterans Affairs met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing on the Department of Veterans Affairs’ (VA’s) capital asset program.

Testimony was provided by: The Honorable Anthony Principi, Former Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Roscoe G. Butler, Deputy Director for Health Care, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Debra Draper, Director, Health Care Team, Government Accountability Office; and James M. Sullivan, Director, Office of Asset Enterprise Management, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, who was accompanied by Regan Crump MSN, DrPH, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health, Policy, and Planning, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “Care Where It Counts: Assessing VA’s Capital Asset Needs,” Serial No. 115–22.

### **Oversight Hearing—New Names, Same Problems: The VA Medical Surgical Prime Vendor Program**

On December 7, 2017, the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs held a hearing on the VA Medical/Surgical Prime Vendor (MSPV) program, including its “Next Generation” and “2.0” iterations.

Testimony was provided by Ricky Lemmon, Acting Chief Procurement and Logistics Officer, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, accompanied by Phillip Christy, Acting Executive Director, Office of Acquisition Operations, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Shelby Oakley, Director, Acquisition and Sourcing Management, U.S. Government Accountability Office; and Roger Waldron, President, The Coalition for Government Procurement. A statement for the record was provided by Advamed. See, “New Names, Same Problems: The VA Medical Surgical Prime Vendor Program,” Serial No. 115–57.

*Second Session***Oversight Hearing—The Denver Replacement Medical Center: Light at the End of the Tunnel?**

On January 17, 2018, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a hearing on the completion of construction and beginning of activation at the new Rocky Mountain Regional Medical Center in Aurora, Colorado.

Testimony was provided by Stella Fiotes, AIA, Acting Principal Executive Director, Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, accompanied by Dennis Milsten, Associate Executive Director, Office of Construction and Facilities Management, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Ralph Gigliotti, FACHE, Network Director, VISN 19, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Lloyd Caldwell, Director of Military Programs, U.S. Army Corps of Engineer; and Andrew Von Ah, Director, Physical Infrastructure Team, U.S. Government Accountability Office. See, "The Denver Replacement Medical Center: Light at the End of the Tunnel?" Serial No. 115-57.

**Oversight Hearing—Appeals Reform: Will VA's Implementation Effectively Service Veterans?**

On Tuesday, January 30, 2018, the Full Committee held a hearing to examine VA's implementation of the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by The Honorable Thomas G. Bowman, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Bowman was accompanied by The Honorable Cheryl L. Mason, Chairman, Board of Veterans' Appeals, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. David R. McLenachen, Director, Appeals Management Office, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and, Mr. David J. Barrans, Chief Counsel, Benefits Law Group, Office of General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Additionally, testimony was provided by The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro, Comptroller General, U.S. Accountability Office; Mr. Dodaro was accompanied by Ms. Elizabeth H. Curda, Director, Education, Workforce, and Income Security Team, U.S. Government Accountability Office.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Jim Marszalek, National Service Director, Disabled American Veterans; Ms. Diane Boyd Rauber, Esq., Executive Director, National Organization of Veterans' Advocates; and, Mr. Steven Henry, Associate Legislative Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America.

A Statement for the Record was provided by The American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. See, "Appeals Reform: Will VA's Implementation Effectively Service Veterans?" Serial No. 115-XX.

**Oversight Hearing—VA Caregiver Support Program: Correcting Course for Veteran Caregivers**

On February 6, 2018, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs met in open session to discuss the Department of Veterans Affairs' Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: The Honorable David Shulkin M.D., Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, who was accompanied by Margaret (Meg) Kabat LCSW-C, CCM, Acting Chief Consultant, Care Management, Chaplain and Social Work Service, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Richard M. Allman M.D., Chief Consultant, Geriatrics and Extended Care Service, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: Adrian Atizado, Deputy National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Sarah Dean, Associate Legislative Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America; and Steven Schwab, Executive Director, The Elizabeth Dole Foundation. See, “VA Caregiver Support Program: Correcting Course for Veteran Caregivers,” Serial No. 115–XX.

#### **Oversight Hearing—U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2019**

On February 15, 2018, the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs held a hearing to receive VA’s testimony on its Fiscal Year 2019 budget request.

Testimony was provided by The Honorable David J. Shulkin M.D., Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, accompanied by The Honorable Jon Rychalski, Assistant Secretary for Management and Chief Financial Officer, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mark Yow, Chief Financial Officer, Veterans Health Administration; James Manker, Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration; Matthew Sullivan, Deputy Under Secretary for Finance and Planning, National Cemetery Administration; and Richard Chandler, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Resource Management, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2019,” Serial No. 115–57.

#### **Oversight Field Hearing—Partnering, Payment, and Provider Access: VA Community Care in North Carolina**

On March 23, 2018, the Full Committee met in open session to conduct an oversight field hearing in Fayetteville, North Carolina, to discuss strategies to improve the Department of Veterans Affairs’ care in the community programs—including the Choice program—to facilitate access to timely, quality care for veterans in North Carolina both inside the Department’s healthcare system and in the community.

Testimony was provided by: David W. Catoe, FHFMA, Assistant Vice-President, Patient Financial Services, Atrium Health; Sarah Verardo, Executive Director, The Independence Fund; Staff Sergeant Gary B. Goodwin (Ret.), Veteran, U.S. Army; Chief Master Sergeant Daryl D. Cook, Chief, Fire Emergency Services, 145th Civil Engineering Squadron/Civil Engineering Flight, North Carolina Air National Guard; and DeAnne M. Seekins MBA, Network Director, VA Mid-Atlantic Health Care Network (VISN 6), Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, who was accompanied by Mark E. Shelhorse M.D., Interim Medical Center Director, Fayetteville VA Medical Center, Chief Medical Officer, VA Mid-Atlantic Health Care Network (VISN 6), Veterans

Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Joseph Enderle, Program Manager, Veterans Choice and VA Timely Payment Initiative, Delivery Operations, Office of Community Care, Veterans Health Administration. See, “Partnering, Payment, and Provider Access: VA Community Care in North Carolina,” Serial No. 115–XX.

**Oversight Hearing—The Curious Case of the VISN Takeover: Assessing VA’s Governance Structure**

On May 22, 2018, the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs held a hearing on the organization and performance of VA’s Veterans Integrated Service Networks.

Testimony was provided by Carolyn Clancy, M.D., Executive in Charge, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, accompanied by W. Bryan Gamble, M.D., Deputy Chief of Staff, Orlando VA Medical Center, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; The Honorable Michael J. Missal, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Roscoe G. Butler, Deputy Director for Health Care, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion. See, “The Curious Case of the VISN Takeover: Assessing VA’s Governance Structure,” Serial No. 115–57.

**Oversight Hearing—VA Electronic Health Record Modernization: the Beginning of the Beginning**

On June 26, 2018, the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs held a hearing on the VA Electronic Health Record Modernization (EHRM) program.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Peter O’Rourke, Acting Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, accompanied by John Windom, Program Executive Officer, Electronic Health Record Modernization Program, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; John Short, Chief Technology Officer, Electronic Health Record Modernization Program, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Ashwini Zenooz, M.D., Chief Medical Officer, Electronic Health Record Modernization Program, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Vice Admiral Raquel Bono, Director, Defense Health Agency, U.S. Department of Defense. On the second panel, testimony was provided by John Windom, Program Executive Officer, Electronic Health Record Modernization Program, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, accompanied by John Short, Chief Technology Officer, Electronic Health Record Modernization Program, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and Ashwini Zenooz, M.D., Chief Medical Officer, Electronic Health Record Modernization Program, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Zane Burke, President, Cerner Corporation; and David Powner, Director of IT Management Issues, U.S. Government Accountability Office. See, “VA Electronic Health Record Modernization: The Beginning of the Beginning,” Serial No. 115–57.

**Oversight Hearing—Department of Veterans’ Affairs Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act: One Year Later**

On July 17, 2018 the Full Committee met in an open session to conduct an oversight hearing on implementation of Department of

Veterans' Affairs Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: Mr. Peter O'Rourke, Acting Secretary U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs who was accompanied by Mr. Kirk Nicholas, Acting Executive Director, Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Mr. Nathan Maenle, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Human Resources and Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: Mr. J. David Cox Sr., National President, American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE). See, "Department of Veterans' Affairs Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act: One Year Later," Serial No. 115–XX.

#### **Oversight Hearing—Assessing Whether VA is on Track to Successfully Implement Appeals Reform**

On Tuesday, July 24, 2018, the Full Committee held a hearing to explore the Department of Veterans Affairs' progress towards full implementation of the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by The Honorable Paul R. Lawrence, Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Lawrence was accompanied by The Honorable Cheryl L. Mason, Chairman, Board of Veterans' Appeals, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. David R. McLenachen, Director, Appeals Management Office, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Richard J. Hipolit, Deputy General Counsel for Legal Policy, Office of General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and, Mr. Lloyd Thrower, Deputy Chief Information Officer, Account Manager, Benefits Portfolio, Office of Information & Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Additionally, testimony was provided by Ms. Elizabeth H. Curda, Director, Education, Workforce, and Income Security Team, U.S. Government Accountability Office; Ms. Curda was accompanied by Mr. James T. Whitcomb, Assistant Director, Education, Workforce, and Income Security Team, U.S. Government Accountability Office. See, "Assessing Whether VA Is On Track to Successfully Implement Appeals Reform." Serial No. 115–XX.

#### **Oversight Hearing—Veteran Suicide Prevention: Maximizing Effectiveness and Increasing Awareness**

September 27, 2018, the Full Committee met in open session to discuss the Department of Veterans Affairs' efforts to prevent suicide among veterans.

Testimony was provided by: Gregory K. Brown Ph.D., Director, Center for the Prevention of Suicide, Research Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania; Michael C. Richardson, Vice President of Independent Services and Mental Health, Wounded Warrior Project; Lt Col James R. Lorraine USAF (Ret.), President and Chief Executive Officer, America's Warrior Partnership; Bill Mulcahy, Co-Founder, Guard Your Buddy; and Keita Franklin LCSW, Ph.D., National Director, Suicide Prevention, Office of Mental Health and Suicide



Prevention, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, who was accompanied by Michael W. Fisher MSW, Chief Readjustment Counseling Officer, Readjustment Counseling Service, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “Veteran Suicide Prevention: Maximizing Effectiveness and Increasing Awareness,” Serial No. 115–XX.

### **Oversight Hearing—Is VA Ready for Full Implementation of Appeals Reform?**

On Wednesday, December 12, 2018, the Full Committee held a hearing to explore the Department of Veterans Affairs’ progress towards full implementation of the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Mr. James Byrne, Acting Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Byrne was accompanied by The Honorable Cheryl L. Mason, Chairman, Board of Veterans’ Appeals, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. David R. McLenachen, Director, Appeals Management Office, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Lloyd Thrower, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Additionally, testimony was provided by The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro, Comptroller General; U.S. Accountability Office; Mr. Dodaro was accompanied by Ms. Elizabeth H. Curda, Director, Education, Workforce, and Income Security Team, U.S. Government Accountability Office. See, “Is VA Ready for Full Implementation of Appeals Reform?” Serial No. 115–XX.

### **Oversight Hearing—Tracking Transformation: VA Mission Act Implementation**

On December 19, 2018, the Full Committee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing of the Department of Veterans Affairs’ implementation of the MISSION Act 180 days after enactment.

Testimony was provided by: The Honorable Robert Wilkie, Secretary, U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, who was accompanied by Melissa Glynn Ph.D., Assistant Secretary, Office of Enterprise Integration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and Steven L. Lieberman M.D., Executive in Charge, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “Tracking Transformation: VA MISSION Act Implementation,” Serial No. 115–XX.

## ACTIVITIES OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH

### *First Session*

#### LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

### **Legislative Hearing—Legislative Hearing On: Draft Legislation, the Veterans Affairs Medical Scribe Pilot Act of 2017; H.R. 91; H.R. 95; H.R. 467; H.R. 907; H.R. 918; H.R. 1005; H.R. 1162; H.R. 1545, and H.R. 1662**

On March 29, 2017, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on the following: draft legislation, the Veterans Affairs Medical Scribe Pilot Act of 2017; H.R. 91, the Building Supportive Networks for Women Veterans Act; H.R. 95, the Veterans’ Access to Child Care Act; H.R. 467, the VA

Scheduling Accountability Act; H.R. 907, the Newborn Care Improvement Act; H.R. 918, the Veterans Urgent Access to Mental Health Care Act; H.R. 1005, to improve the provision of adult day health care services for veterans; H.R. 1162, the No Hero Left Untreated Act; H.R. 1545, to clarify VA's authority to disclose certain patient information to State controlled substance monitoring programs; and H.R. 1662, to prohibit smoking in any facility of the Veterans Health Administration.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: Representative Phil Roe of Tennessee; Representative Jackie Walorski of Indiana; Representative Doug Collins of Georgia; Representative Mike Coffman of Colorado; Representative Stephen Knight of California; and Representative Ann M. Kuster of New Hampshire.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: Kayda Keleher, Legislative Associate, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Shurhonda Y. Love, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Sarah S. Dean, Associate Legislative Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America; and Jennifer S. Lee, M.D., Deputy Under Secretary for Health and for Policy and Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs who was accompanied by Susan Blauert, Chief Counsel for the Health Care Law Group, Office of the General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, "the Veterans Affairs Medical Scribe Pilot Act of 2017; H.R. 91; H.R. 95; H.R. 467; H.R. 907; H.R. 918; H.R. 1005; H.R. 1162; H.R. 1545, and H.R. 1662," Serial No. 115–8.

**Markup—H.R. 91, H.R. 95, H.R. 467, H.R. 907, H.R. 918, H.R. 1005, H.R. 1162, H.R. 1545, H.R. 1662, and H.R. 1848**

On April 6, 2017, the Subcommittee on Health met and marked up: H.R. 91, the Building Supportive Networks for Women Veterans Act, introduced by Representative Julia Brownley of California; H.R. 95, the Veterans' Access to Child Care Act, introduced by Representative Julia Brownley of California; H.R. 467, the VA Scheduling Accountability Act, introduced by Representative Jackie Walorski of Indiana; H.R. 907, the Newborn Care Improvement Act, introduced by Representative Doug Collins of Georgia; H.R. 918, the Veteran Urgent Access to Mental Healthcare Act, introduced by Representative Mike Coffman of Colorado; H.R. 1005, to improve the provision of adult day health care services for veterans, introduced by Representative Lee Zeldin of New York; H.R. 1162, the No Hero Left Untreated Act, introduced by Representative Stephen Knight of California; H.R. 1545, to clarify the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to disclose certain patient information to State controlled substance monitoring programs introduced by Representative Ann Kuster of New Hampshire; H.R. 1662, to prohibit smoking in any facility of the Veterans Health Administration, introduced by Representative Brad Wenstrup of Ohio; and H.R. 1848, the Veterans Affairs Medical Scribe Pilot Act of 2017, introduced by Representative Phil Roe of Tennessee.

On April 6, 2017, H.R. 91; H.R. 95; H.R. 467; H.R. 907; H.R. 918; H.R. 1005; H.R. 1162; H.R. 1545; H.R. 1662; and H.R. 1848 were considered by the Subcommittee on Health en bloc. H.R. 91; H.R. 95; H.R. 467; H.R. 907; H.R. 918; H.R. 1005; H.R. 1162; H.R. 1545; H.R. 1662; and H.R. 1848 all passed the Health Subcommittee by

voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 91; H.R. 95; H.R. 467; H.R. 907; H.R. 918; H.R. 1005; H.R. 1162; H.R. 1545; H.R. 1662; and H.R. 1848 to the Full Committee was offered by Ranking Member Julia Brownley of California and adopted by voice vote.

**Legislative Hearing—H.R. 93; H.R. 501; H.R. 1063; H.R. 1066; H.R. 1943; H.R. 1972; H.R. 2147; H.R. 2225; H.R. 2327; and, A Draft Bill To Make Certain Improvements in VA’s Health Professionals Educational Assistance Program**

On September 26, 2017, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on the following: H.R. 93, to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for increased access to Department of Veterans Affairs medical care for women veterans; H.R. 501, VA Transparency Enhancement Act of 2017; H.R. 1063, Veteran Prescription Continuity Act; H.R. 1066, VA Management Alignment Act of 2017; H.R. 1943, Restoring Maximum Mobility to Our Nation’s Veterans Act of 2017; H.R. 1972, VA Billing Accountability Act; H.R. 2147, Veterans Treatment Court Improvement Act of 2018; H.R. 2225, Veterans Dog Training Therapy Act; H.R. 2327, PAWS Act of 2017; and a draft bill to make certain improvements in VA’s Health Professionals Educational Assistance Program.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: Representative Debbie Dingell of Michigan; Representative Beto O’Rourke of Texas; Representative Derek Kilmer of Washington; Representative Steve King of Iowa; Representative Lloyd Smucker of Pennsylvania; Representative Mike Coffman of Colorado; Representative Steve Stivers of Ohio; Representative Ron DeSantis of Florida; and Representative John Rutherford of Florida.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: Keronica Richardson, Assistant Director of Women and Minority Veterans, Outreach, National Security Division, The American Legion; Rick Weidman, Executive Director for Policy and Government Affairs, Vietnam Veterans of America; Amy Webb, National Legislative Policy Advisor, AMVETS; and Harold Kudler M.D., Acting Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Patient Care Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs who was accompanied by Catherine Biggs-Silver, Executive Director for Mission, Planning, and Analysis, Human Resources and Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “H.R. 93; H.R. 501; H.R. 1063; H.R. 1066; H.R. 1943; H.R. 1972; H.R. 2147; H.R. 2225; H.R. 2327; and, a draft bill to make certain improvements in VA’s Health Professionals Educational Assistance Program,” Serial No. 115–31.

OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

*First Session*

**Site Visit—Memphis, TN**

On January 30–February 2, 2017, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Health traveled to the Memphis, Tennessee, to conduct an oversight visit of the Memphis VA Medical Center. During the oversight visit, Subcommittee staff assessed the operations and management of the facility, toured the grounds, and met with local facility leaders to discuss issues including: human resources, qual-

ity of care, community care, privacy, controlled substances, mental health, engineering, productivity, and information technology.

**Roundtable Discussion—Introductory VSO Roundtable**

On February 1, 2017, the Subcommittee on Health hosted a roundtable discussion entitled, “Introductory VSO Roundtable.”

**Oversight Hearing—Healthy Hiring: Enabling VA To Recruit and Retain Quality Providers**

On March 22, 2017, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing on the ability of the Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Health Administration to recruit and retain high quality clinical and administrative employees.

Testimony was provided by: Max Stier, President and Chief Executive Officer, Partnership for Public Service; Louis J. Celli Jr., Director of National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Steve Young, Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs who was accompanied by Paula Molloy Ph.D., Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Workforce Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Robert Goldenkoff, Director of Strategic Issues, U.S. Government Accountability Office who was accompanied by Debra A. Draper Ph.D., Director of Health Care, U.S. Government Accountability Office. See, “Healthy Hiring: Enabling VA to Recruit and Retain Quality Providers,” Serial No. 115-7

**Site Visit—Dayton, OH**

On April 5-6, 2017, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Health traveled to the Dayton, Ohio, to conduct a visit to the Dayton VA Medical Center. The purpose of this visit was to attend the Community Care Listening Session hosted at the Dayton VA Medical Center.

**Site Visit—Nashville and Mountain Home, TN**

On April 10-13, 2017, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Health traveled to Nashville and Mountain Home, Tennessee, to conduct oversight visits of the Tennessee Valley Healthcare System-Nashville Campus—and the James H. Quillen VA Medical Center. The oversight trip allowed Subcommittee staff to assess and compare the management and operations of two VA medical centers, one in an urban area and one in a rural area.

**Roundtable Discussion—Veteran Caregivers: A Roundtable Discussion on the Challenges and Future of VA’s Caregiver Support Program**

On April 27, 2017, the Subcommittee on Health hosted a roundtable discussion entitled, “Veteran Caregivers: A Roundtable Discussion on the Challenges and Future of VA’s Caregiver Support Program.”

### **Hearing—VA Specialized Services: Lower Extremity Conditions**

On May 2, 2017, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing on lower extremity injuries and conditions among veteran patients.

Testimony was provided by: Steven L. Goldman DPM, MBA, President, American Board of Podiatric Medicine; Seth Rubenstein DPM, Treasurer, Board of Trustees, Immediate Past Chairman of Legislative Committee, American Podiatric Medical Association; Col. James Ficke MD (ret.), Member of American Orthopaedic Foot and Ankle Society, American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons; Jeffrey M. Brandt CPO, Member, American Orthotics and Prosthetics Association; and Jeffrey Robbins DPM, Chief of Podiatry, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “VA Specialized Services: Lower Extremity Conditions,” Serial No. 115–13.

### **Site Visit—Pittsburgh, PA**

On May 8–10, 2017, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Health traveled to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to conduct an oversight visit of the Pittsburgh VA Medical Center. During the oversight visit, Subcommittee staff assessed the research office, non-profit corporations, academic affiliations community care, caregivers, pharmacy and pain management, mental health, union representation, transplants, abandoned property, and site logistics—such as staff training and information technology systems.

### **Oversight Hearing—FY 2018 Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Request for the Veterans Health Administration**

On June 22, 2017, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing on the Department of Veterans Affairs’ fiscal year 2018 budget submission for medical programs. During the hearing, the Subcommittee focused particularly on the President’s budget request as it relates to medical and mental health care, medical and prosthetic research, construction and infrastructure, and veteran homelessness.

Testimony was provided by: Joy Ilem, National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Carl Blake, Associate Executive Director, Government Relations, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Carlos Fuentes, Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Matthew Shuman, Director, Legislative Division, The American Legion; and Poonam Alaigh M.D., MSHCPM, FACP, Acting Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs who was accompanied by Mark W. Yow MBA, Chief Financial Officer, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “FY 2018 Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Request for the Veterans Health Administration,” Serial No. 115–XX.

### **Oversight Hearing—Maximizing Access and Resources: An Examination of VA Productivity and Efficiency**

On July 13, 2017, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing on clinical productivity and efficiency in the Department of Veterans Affairs healthcare system.

Testimony was provided by: C. Sharif Ambrose, Principal, Grant Thornton LLP; Randall B. Williamson, Director, Health Care, Government Accountability Office; Jonathan B. Perlin M.D., Ph.D., President, Clinical Services Group, Chief Medical Officer, HCA Healthcare, Inc.; and Carolyn Clancy M.D., Deputy Under Secretary for Organizational Excellence, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs who was accompanied by Murray D. Altose M.D., Chief of Staff, Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center, Veterans Integrated Service Network 10, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “Maximizing Access and Resources: An Examination of VA Productivity and Efficiency,” Serial No. 115–24.

**Roundtable Discussion—Telehealth Progress and Opportunities for VA Health Care**

On September 12, 2017, the Subcommittee on Health hosted a roundtable discussion entitled, “Telehealth Progress and Opportunities for VA Health Care.”

**Site Visit—Clarksburg, WV**

On September 18–20, 2017, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Health traveled to Clarksburg, West Virginia, to conduct an oversight visit of the Louis A. Johnson VA Medical Center. During the oversight visit, Subcommittee staff assessed a number of issues, such as suicide prevention, the privacy office, community care, mental health, work therapy program, human resources, union representation, engineering department, pharmacy department, controlled substances and opioid initiative, emergency room function, quality management, management, telehealth, academic affiliations, and logistics.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH

*Second Session*

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

**Legislative Hearing—Legislative Hearing on: H.R. 1506; H.R. 2322; H.R. 3832; H.R. 4334; H.R. 4635; A Draft Bill To Authorize VA to Conduct and Support Research on the Efficacy and Safety of Medicinal Cannabis; and, A Draft Bill To Make Certain Improvements in the Family Caregiver Program**

On Tuesday, April 17, 2018, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on the following: H.R. 1506, the VA Health Care Provider Education Debt Relief Act of 2017; H.R. 2322, the Injured and Amputee Veterans Bill of Rights; H.R. 3832, the Veterans Opioid Abuse Prevention Act; H.R. 4334, the Improving Oversight of Women Veterans’ Care Act of 2017; H.R. 4635, to direct the secretary of Veterans Affairs to increase the number of peer-to-peer counselors providing counseling for women veterans, and for other purposes; a draft bill to authorize VA to conduct and support research on the efficacy and safety of medicinal cannabis; and, a draft bill to make certain improvements in the Family Caregiver Program.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: Representative Beto O'Rourke of Texas; Representative Tim Walberg of Michigan; Representative Neal Dunn of Florida; Representative Luis Correa of California; and Representative Mike Coffman of Colorado.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: Louis J. Celli, Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Adrian M. Atizado, Deputy National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Sarah S. Dean, Associate Legislative Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America; and Kayda Keleher, Associate Director National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. See, "H.R. 1506; H.R. 2322; H.R. 3832; H.R. 4334; H.R. 4635; a draft bill to authorize VA to conduct and support research on the efficacy and safety of medicinal cannabis; and, a draft bill to make certain improvements in the Family Caregiver Program," Serial No. 115–XX.

**Legislative Hearing—Legislative Hearing on: H.R. 2787, H.R. 3696, H.R. 5521, H.R. 5693, H.R. 5864, H.R. 5934, H.R. 5974, and H.R. 6066**

On June 13, 2018, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on the following bills: H.R. 2787, the Veterans-Specific Education for Tomorrow's Medical Doctors (VET MD) Act; H.R. 3696, the Wounded Warrior Workforce Enhancement Act; H.R. 5521, the VA Hiring Enhancement Act; H.R. 5693, the Long Term Care Veterans Choice Act; H.R. 5864, the VA Hospitals Establishing Leadership Performance (VA HELP) Act; H.R. 5938, the Veterans Serving Veterans Act of 2018; H.R. 5974, the Department of Veterans Affairs Creation of On-Site Treatment Systems Affording Veterans Improvements and Numerous General Safety Enhancements (VA COST SAVINGS) Act; and H.R. 6066, to improve the productivity of the management of Department of Veterans Affairs health care.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: Representative Vicky Hartzler of Missouri; Representative Marcy Kaptur of Ohio; Representative Matt Cartwright of Pennsylvania; Representative Clay Higgins of Louisiana; Representative Mike Bostt of Illinois; Representative Jeff Denham of California; Representative Jenniffer Gonzalez-Colon of Puerto Rico; and Representative Brad Wenstrup of Ohio.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: Roscoe Butler, Deputy Director for Health Care, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, The American Legion; Jeremy Villanueva, Associate National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Kayda Keleher, Associate Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; and Jessica Bonjorni, Acting Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Workforce Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, who was accompanied by Dayna Cooper, Director, Home and Community-Based Programs, Veterans Health Administration U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, "Legislative Hearing on: H.R. 2787; H.R. 3696; H.R. 5521; H.R. 5693; H.R. 5864; H.R. 5934; H.R. 5974; and H.R. 6066," Serial No. 115–XX.

**Markup—H.R. 2787, H.R. 3696, H.R. 5693, H.R. 5864, H.R. 5938, H.R. 5974, and H.R. 6066**

On June 27, 2018, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session to conduct a markup of the following bills: An Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to H.R. 2787, the Veterans-Specific Education for Tomorrow's Medical Doctors (VET MD) Act, introduced by Representative Marcy Kaptur of Ohio; An Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to H.R. 3696, the Wounded Warrior Workforce Enhancement Act, introduced by Representative Matt Cartwright of Pennsylvania; An Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to H.R. 5693, the Long Term Care Veterans Choice Act, introduced by Representative Clay Higgins of Louisiana; An Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to H.R. 5864, the VA Hospitals Establishing Leadership Performance (VA HELP) Act, introduced by Representative Jenniffer Gonzalez-Colon of Puerto Rico; H.R. 5938, the Veterans Serving Veterans Act of 2018; H.R. 5974, the Department of Veterans Affairs Creation of On-Site Treatment Systems Affording Veterans Improvements and Numerous General Safety Enhancements (VA COST SAVINGS) Act; and An Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to H.R. 6066, to improve the productivity of the management of Department of Veterans Affairs health care, introduced by Representative Brad Wenstrup of Ohio.

On June 27, 2018, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 2787 was offered by Representative Mark Takano of California. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 2787 was offered by Representative Neal Dunn of Florida. The amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to by voice vote. The amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended, was agreed to by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 2787, as amended, to the Full Committee was offered by Representative Julia Brownley of California and agreed to by voice vote.

On June 27, 2018, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3696 was offered by Representative Luis Correa of California and was agreed to by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 3696, as amended, to the Full Committee was offered by Ranking Member Julia Brownley of California and agreed to by voice vote.

On June 27, 2018, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5693 was offered by Representative Clay Higgins of Louisiana and was agreed to by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 5693, as amended, to the Full Committee was offered by Ranking Member Julia Brownley of California and agreed to by voice vote.

On June 27, 2018, a motion to favorably forward H.R. 5864, as introduced, to the Full Committee was offered by Ranking Member Julia Brownley of California and agreed to by voice vote.

On June 27, 2018, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5938 was offered by Representative Jenniffer Gonzalez-Colon of Puerto Rico and was agreed to by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 5938, as amended, to the Full Committee was offered by Ranking Member Julia Brownley of California and agreed to by voice vote.

On June 27, 2018, an amendment to H.R. 5974 was offered by Representative Amata Radewagen of American Samoa and was



agreed to by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 5974, as amended, to the Full Committee was offered by Ranking Member Julia Brownley of California and agreed to by voice vote.

On June 27, 2018, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 6066 was offered by Chairman Neal Dunn of Florida and was agreed to by voice vote. A motion to favorably forward H.R. 6066, as amended, to the Full Committee was offered by Ranking Member Julia Brownley and agreed to by voice vote.

#### **Legislative Hearing—H.R. 5413 and H.R. 6418**

On September 13, 2018, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on H.R. 5413, the Improving Veterans Access to Congressional Services Act of 2018; and H.R. 6418, the VA Website Accessibility Act of 2018.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: Representative Brian Mast of Florida; and Representative Elizabeth Esty of Connecticut.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: Melanie Brunson, Director of Government Relations, Blinded Veterans Association; Matthew Shuman, Director, National Legislative Division, The American Legion; and Jose Ramos, Legislative Director, Wounded Warrior Project. See, “Legislative Hearing on H.R. 5413 and H.R. 6418,” Serial No. 115–XX.

### OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

#### *Second Session*

#### **Roundtable Discussion—VA’s Progress With Regard To the GAO High Risk List**

On January 10, 2018, the Subcommittee on Health hosted a roundtable discussion entitled, “Roundtable Discussion: VA’s progress with regard to the GAO High Risk List.”

#### **Joint Oversight Hearing of the Subcommittee on Health and the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity—Addressing Veteran Homelessness: Current Position; Future Course**

On January 18, 2018, the Subcommittee on Health and Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing on the efforts of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Department of Labor to reduce veteran homelessness.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: John F. Clancy, President and Chief Executive Officer, Tristate Veterans Community Alliance; Angela F. Williams, President and Chief Executive Officer, Easterseals, Inc.; Stephen Peck, President and Chief Executive Officer U.S. VETS; John W. Martin, Development Director, The Opportunity Center; and Kathryn Monet, Chief Executive Officer, National Coalition for Homeless Veterans.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: Matt Miller, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Veterans’ Employment and Training Service, U.S. Department of Labor; Dominique Blom, General Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Public and Indian Housing, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; and Thomas Lynch M.D., Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Clinical Oper-

ations, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, who was Accompanied by Keith W. Harris Ph.D., Director of Clinical Operations, Homeless Programs Office, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “Addressing Veteran Homelessness: Current Position; Future Course,” Serial No. 115–XX.

#### **Roundtable Discussion—VSO Discussion**

On March 7, 2018, the Subcommittee on Health hosted a roundtable discussion entitled, “VSO Discussion.”

#### **Site Visit—San Juan, PR**

On March 11 through March 12, 2018, The Chairman of the Full Committee and the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Health traveled to San Juan and Arecibo, Puerto Rico, to conduct an oversight visit of the Veterans Affairs Caribbean Healthcare System in San Juan and the Veterans Affairs Arecibo Clinic in Arecibo. Staff assessed the operations of both locations following Hurricane Maria.

#### **Oversight Field Hearing—VA Healthcare: Maximizing Resources in Puerto Rico**

On March 12, 2018, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session to conduct an oversight field hearing to discuss the provisions of Department of Veterans Affairs’ medical and mental health care programs, as well as VA care in the community programs, with a focus on the best use of available resources in Puerto Rico.

Testimony was provided by: Agustín Montañéz-Allman, Puerto Rico State Director of Veterans’ Affairs; Rafael Rodríguez M.D., Puerto Rico Secretary of Health; Victor Ramos M.D., Puerto Rico College of Physicians and Surgeons; and Miguel LaPuz M.D., Director, VA Sunshine Healthcare Network (VISN 8), Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, who was accompanied by Antonio Sánchez M.D., Acting Director, VA Caribbean Healthcare System, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Lewis Ratchford Jr., Deputy Assistant Secretary, Emergency Management & Resilience, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “VA Healthcare: Maximizing Resources in Puerto Rico” Serial No. 115–XX.

#### **Oversight Hearing—FY 2019 Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Request for the Veterans Health Administration**

On March 15, 2018, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing on the Department of Veterans Affairs fiscal year (FY) 2019 budget submission for medical programs.

Testimony was provided by: Adrian M. Atizado, Deputy National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Sarah S. Dean, Associate Legislative Director, Government Relations Department, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Patrick Murray, Associate Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Matthew J. Shuman, Director, National Legislative Division, The American Legion; and Carolyn M. Clancy M.D., Executive in Charge, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, who was accompanied by Rachel Mitchell, Deputy Chief Financial Officer, Veterans Health Administration, U.S.

Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “FY 2019 Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Request for the Veterans Health Administration,” Serial No. 115–XX.

**Joint Oversight Hearing of the Subcommittee on Health and the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigation—VA Research: Focusing on Funding, Findings, and Partnerships**

On May 17, 2018, the Subcommittee on Health and the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing to address accountability issues regarding Department of Veterans Affairs’ partnerships with Non-profit Research and Education Corporations, academic affiliates, and other entities to administer research funding and conduct and support research efforts.

Testimony was provided by: Ms. Robin Rusconi, Chair, Board of Directors, National Association of Veterans Research & Education Foundation; Paul Klotman, M.D., President, CEO, and Executive Dean, Baylor College of Medicine, On behalf of Association of American Medical Colleges; and Carolyn Clancy, M.D., Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Organization Excellence, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs who was accompanied by Rachel B. Ramoni D.M.D., Sc.D., Chief Research and Development Officer, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “VA Research: Focusing on Funding, Findings, and Partnerships,” Serial No. 115–57.

**Oversight Hearing—An Assessment of the Potential Health Effects of Burn Pit Exposure Among Veterans**

On June 7, 2018, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session to discuss the potential long-term health effects of burn pit exposure among veterans.

Testimony was provided by: Tom Porter, Legislative Director, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; Kenneth Wiseman, Associate Legislative Director, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; and Ralph L. Erickson, M.D., Dr.PH, Chief Consultant, Post-Deployment Health, Office of Patient Care Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs who was accompanied by Drew A. Helmer M.D., M.S., Director, War Related Illness and Injury Study Center and Airborne Hazards Center of Excellence, VA New Jersey Health Care System, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See “An Assessment of the Potential Health Effects of Burn Pit Exposure among Veterans,” Serial No. 115–XX.

**Oversight Hearing—More Than Just Filling Vacancies: A Closer Look at VA Hiring Authorities, Recruiting, and Retention**

On June 21, 2018, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session to discuss staffing for the Department of Veterans Affairs healthcare system.

Testimony was provided by: Max Stier, President and Chief Executive Officer, Partnership for Public Service; Debra A. Draper, Director, Health Care, Government Accountability Office; The Honorable Michael J. Missal, Inspector General, Office of the Inspector

General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Peter Shelby, Assistant Secretary for the Office of Human Resources and Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, who was accompanied by Jessica Bonjorni, Acting Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Workforce Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “More Than Just Filling Vacancies: A Closer look at VA Hiring Authorities, Recruiting, and Retention,” Serial No. 115–XX.

**Joint Roundtable Discussion of the Subcommittee on Health and the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs—Burn Pits and Potential Exposures: Establishing Links to Benefits and Health Care**

On July 18, 2018, the Subcommittee on Health and Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a joint roundtable discussion entitled, “Burn Pits and Potential Exposures: Establishing Links to Benefits and Health Care.”

**Roundtable Discussion—Current Practices and Future Trends of VA Prosthetic Care**

On July 25, 2018, the Subcommittee on Health held a roundtable discussion entitled, “Current Practices and Future Trends of VA Prosthetic Care.”

**Oversight Field Hearing—Va Long-Term Care: What’s Working, What’s Not, and How To Best Serve Our Aging Veterans**

On July 30, 2018, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session to conduct an oversight field hearing in Camarillo, California, on long-term care for veterans and a veteran’s choices for care as they age or face catastrophic injuries or illnesses.

Testimony was provided by: Katy Krul, Acting Executive Director, Oxnard Family Circle ADHC; Mike McManus, County of Ventura Veterans Service Officer; Thomas Martin, Assistant Deputy Secretary, Homes Division California Department of Veterans Affairs; and Teresa Boyd, D.O., Acting Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Clinical Operations and Management, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, who was accompanied by Dr. Scotte Hartronft, M.D., Chief of Staff, VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “VA Long-Term Care: What’s Working, What’s Not, and How to Best Serve Our Aging Veterans,” Serial No. 115–XX.

**Site Visit—Los Angeles, CA**

On July 30, 2018, the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Health traveled to Los Angeles, California, to conduct an oversight visit of the Greater LA Health Care System to assess campus construction and medical center operations.

**Site Visit—Gainesville and Lake City, FL**

On August 9–10, 2018, The Chairman of the Subcommittee on Health traveled to Gainesville and Lake City, Florida, to conduct oversight visits to the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans

Health System located in Gainesville and the Lake City Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Lake City

**Site Visit—Pago Pago, AS, and Honolulu, HI**

On August 26–31, 2018, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Health traveled to Pago Pago, American Samoa, and Honolulu, Hawaii, to conduct an oversight visit to assess the care available to veterans in American Samoa and Hawaii.

**Site Visit—Washington, D.C.**

On October 11, 2018, Majority Staff for the Subcommittee on Health conducted an oversight visit of the U.S. VETS Washington, D.C. location to assess the organization’s comprehensive services provided to homeless and at-risk for homelessness veterans through partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

**Site Visit—Manchester, NH, and White River Junction, VT**

On October 16–18, 2018, Majority staff from the Subcommittee on Health traveled to Manchester, New Hampshire, and White River Junction, Vermont, to conduct oversight visits of the Manchester Veterans Affairs Medical Center, the White River Junction Veterans Affairs Medical Center, the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and the White River Junction Vet Center.

**Site Visit—Shepherdstown, WV**

On October 22, 2018, Majority and Minority staff for the Subcommittee on Health traveled to Shepherdstown, West Virginia, to conduct an oversight visit of the White House Call Center and to assess the operations and management of the White House Hotline.

**Travel—New Orleans, LA**

On October 30–November 1, 2018, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Health traveled to New Orleans, Louisiana, to attend the 2018 National Veterans Small Business Engagement.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC  
OPPORTUNITY

*First Session*

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

**Legislative Hearing—A Legislative Hearing on H.R. 1461, the Veterans, Employees, and Taxpayers Protection Act of 2017**

On March 21, 2017, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on H.R. 1461, the Veterans, Employees, and Taxpayers Protection Act of 2017.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: Ms. Kimberly Perkins McLeod, Acting Executive Director, Labor Management Relations, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs who was accompanied by Mr. Rondy Waye, Human Resources Policy Advisor, Office of Human Resources and Management, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Shirley Parker Blommel, President, Local 390, St. Cloud VA Health Care System, American Federation of Govern-

ment Employees, AFL–CIO; and Mr. Derk A. Wilcox, Senior Attorney, Mackinac Center for Public Policy. See, “A legislative hearing on H.R. 1461, the “Veterans, Employees, and Taxpayers Protection Act of 2017,” Serial No. 115–6

**Legislative Hearing—A Legislative Hearing On The Following Bills: H.R. 282; H.R. 1690; H.R. 2631; H.R. 2772; A Draft Bill Entitled, “To Amend Title 38, United States Code, To Authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs To Furnish Assistance for Adaptations of Residences of Veterans in Rehabilitation Programs Under Chapter 31 Of Such Title, and for Other Purposes;” and A Draft Bill Entitled, “To Amend Title 38, United States Code, To Permit Appraisers Approved by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs To Make Appraisals for Purposes of Chapter 37 of Such Title Based on Inspections Performed by Third Parties”**

On June 29, 2017, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on the following bills: H.R. 282, Military Residency Choice Act; H.R. 1690, Department of Veterans Affairs Bonus Transparency Act; H.R. 2631, Justice for Servicemembers Act of 2017; H.R. 2772, SEA Act of 2018; a draft bill entitled, “To amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish assistance for adaptations of residences of veterans in rehabilitation programs under chapter 31 of such title, and for other purposes;” and a draft bill entitled, “To amend title 38, United States Code, to permit appraisers approved by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make appraisals for purposes of chapter 37 of such title based on inspections performed by third parties.”

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: Representative Elise Stefanik of New York; Representative Robert Wittman of Virginia; Representative Claudia Tenney of New York; Representative David Cicilline of Rhode Island; and Representative Scott Taylor of Virginia.

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, who was accompanied by Ms. Tia Butler, Executive Director, Corporate Senior Executive Management Office, Human Resources and Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and Mr. Jeffrey London, Director, Loan Guaranty Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Maj. Gen. Jeffrey E. Phillips, USAR (Ret.), Executive Director, Reserve Officers Association; and Mr. Gabriel Stultz, Legislative Counsel, Paralyzed Veterans of America. See, “A legislative hearing on H.R. 282; H.R. 1690; H.R. 2631; H.R. 2772; a draft bill entitled, “To amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish assistance for adaptations of residences of veterans in rehabilitation programs under chapter 31 of such title, and for other purposes;” and a draft bill entitled, “To amend title 38, United States Code, to permit appraisers approved by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make appraisals for purposes of chapter 37 of such title based on inspections performed by third parties,” Serial No. 115–21.

**Markup—H.R. 282, H.R. 1690, and H.R. 2772**

On July 12, 2017, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met and marked up: H.R. 282, the Military Residency Choice Act, introduced by Representative Elise Stefanik of New York; H.R. 1690, the Department of Veterans Affairs Bonus Transparency Act, introduced by Representative Claudia Tenney of New York; and H.R. 2772, the VA Senior Executive Accountability Act or the ‘SEA Act,’ introduced by Representative Scott Taylor of Virginia.

On July 12, 2017, an amendment to H.R. 1690 was offered by Representative Beto O’Rourke of Texas and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 1690, as amended, passed the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On July 12, 2017, H.R. 282 and H.R. 2772 were considered by the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity en bloc. H.R. 282 and H.R. 2772 passed the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity by voice vote and were favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

**Legislative Hearing—A Legislative Hearing on the Following Bills: H.R. 815; H.R. 3018; H.R. 3634; H.R. 3949; H.R. 3965; A Draft Bill Entitled, “To Amend Title 38, United States Code, to Eliminate the Applicability of Certain Provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act to Housing and Business Loan Programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs”; and a Draft Bill Entitled, “To Amend Title 38, United States Code, to Make Certain Improvements to the Use of Educational Assistance Provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs for Flight Training Programs”**

On October 11, 2017, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on the following bills: H.R. 815, 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 Department of Veterans Affairs.; H.R. 3018, Veterans’ Entry to Apprenticeship Act; H.R. 3634, Securing Electronic Records for Veterans’ Ease Act of 2017; H.R. 3949, VALOR Act; H.R. 3965, Veterans Armed for Success Act; a draft bill entitled, “to amend title 38, United States Code, to eliminate the applicability of certain provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act to housing and business loan programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs”; and a draft bill entitled, “To amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements to the use of educational assistance provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs for flight training programs.”

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: Representative John H. Rutherford of Florida; Representative James A. Himes of Connecticut; Representative Martha McSally of Arizona; and Representative Ro Khanna of California.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: Major General Robert M. Worley II USAF (Ret.), Director, Education Service, Veterans Benefit Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs who was accompanied by Mr. Jeffrey London, Director, Loan Guaranty Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. John Kamin, Assistant Director, Veterans

Employment and Education, The American Legion; and Mr. William Hubbard, Vice President of Government Affairs, Student Veterans of America. See “A legislative hearing on the following bills: H.R. 815; H.R. 3018; H.R. 3634; H.R. 3949; H.R. 3965; a draft bill entitled, “To amend title 38, United States Code, to eliminate the applicability of certain provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act to housing and business loan programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs”; and a draft bill entitled, “To amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements to the use of educational assistance provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs for flight training programs,” Serial No. 115–33.

**Markup of H.R. 815; H.R. 3018; H.R. 3634; H.R. 3949; H.R. 3965; and a Draft Bill Entitled, “To Amend Title 38, United States Code, to Make Certain Improvements to the Use of Educational Assistance Provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs for Flight Training Programs”**

On October 25, 2017, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met and marked up: H.R. 815, 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 Department of Veterans Affairs introduced by Representative Lee Zeldin of New York; H.R. 3018, the Veterans’ Entry to Apprenticeship Act introduced by Representative Martha McSally of Arizona; H.R. 3634, the Securing Electronic Records for Veterans’ Ease Act of 2017 introduced by Representative Jim Himes of Connecticut; H.R. 3949, the Veteran Apprenticeship and Labor Opportunity Reform (VALOR) Act introduced by Representative Ro Khanna of California; H.R. 3965, the Veterans Armed for Success Act introduced by Representative John Rutherford of Florida; and a draft bill entitled, to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements to the use of educational assistance provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs for flight training programs.

On October 25, 2017, an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to H.R. 3949 was offered by Representative Beto O’Rourke of Texas. An amendment to the Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to H.R. 3949 was offered by Representative Jim Banks of Indiana and was adopted by voice vote. The amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended, was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 3949, as amended, passed the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On October 25, 2017, H.R. 815; H.R. 3018; H.R. 3634; H.R. 3965; and a draft bill entitled, “To amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements to the use of educational assistance provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs for flight training programs” were considered by the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity en bloc. H.R. 815; H.R. 3018; H.R. 3634; H.R. 3965; and a draft bill entitled, “To amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements to the use of educational assistance provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs for flight training programs” passed the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity by voice vote and were favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.



## OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

*First Session***Roundtable Discussion—Examining the Results of the National Veterans Education Success Tracker**

On February 7, 2017, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a roundtable to examine and discuss the results of the NVEST project that was completed by the Student Veterans of America, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the National Student Clearinghouse.

**Oversight Hearing—the Use of Official Time for Union Activities at the Department of Veterans Affairs**

On February 16, 2017, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session to conduct a joint oversight hearing with the Subcommittee on Government Operations of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform to discuss the Government Accountability (GAO) report entitled, “Union Activities. VA Could Better Track the Amount of Official Time Used by Employees,” and how the use of official time at the Department of Veterans Affairs needs to be improved.

Testimony was provided by: Ms. Cindy Brown Barnes, Director of Education, Workforce and Income Security, U.S. Government Accountability Office; Mr. J. David Cox, Sr., National President, American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO; Mr. Trey Kovacs, Policy Analyst, Competitive Enterprise Institute; and Ms. Kimberly Perkins McLeod, Acting Executive Director for Labor Management Relations, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “The Use of Official Time for Union Activities at the Department of Veterans Affairs,” Serial No. 115–3.

**Roundtable Discussion—Examining Modern Day Learning Opportunities for Veterans**

On March 9, 2017, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity hosted a roundtable to discuss modern day learning opportunities for veterans and how to make certain programs such as micro degrees, tech boot camps, distance learning etc. more accessible to veterans.

**Oversight Hearing—Assessing VA Approved Appraisers and How To Improve the Program for the 21st Century**

On April 4, 2017, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing of the Department of Veterans Affairs Loan Guaranty Service and VA-approved appraisers. During the hearing, the Subcommittee primarily focused on the need for an improved appraisal process, especially for veteran homebuyers who live in rural communities.

Testimony was provided by: Mr. Jeffrey London, Director, Loan Guaranty Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs who was accompanied by Mr. Gerald Kifer, Supervisory Appraiser, Loan Guaranty Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Michelle Brady, 2016 Real Property Valuation Committee Chair, National Association of Realtors; Mr. Stephen S. Wagner, Vice

President, Appraisal Institute; and Mr. Russell Johnson, Chief Revenue Officer, Clear Capital. See, “Assessing VA Approved Appraisers and How to Improve the Program for the 21st Century,” Serial No. 115–10.

#### **Site Visit—Buffalo, NY**

On April 17–19, 2017, the Majority Staff Director and the Professional Staff Member for the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity traveled to Buffalo, New York, to conduct an oversight visit of the Buffalo Regional Processing Office. During the oversight visit, Subcommittee staff assessed the facility’s management and ability to process GI Bill claims in an accurate and timely manner; examined the space for the Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment counselors located there; and met with management to discuss any challenges that exist at the facility among the leadership team and the rest of the facility’s staff.

#### **Oversight Hearing—Improving the Quality and Timeliness of GI Bill Processing for Student Veterans**

On June 8, 2017, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing of the quality and timeliness of the processing of GI Bill claims. During the hearing, the Subcommittee primarily focused on the information and technology (IT) systems for processing GI Bill claims at the Department of Veterans Affairs and the sharing of information for GI Bill claims between the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Defense.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: Major General Robert M. Worley II USAF (Ret.), Director, Education Service, Veterans Benefit Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs who was accompanied by Mr. Lloyd Thrower, Acting Information Technology Account Manager, Benefits Portfolio, Office of Information & Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Ms. Roberta “Robbie” Lowe, Director, Debt Management Center, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Lernes J. Hebert, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy, U.S. Department of Defense who was accompanied by Mr. Mark Breckenridge, Deputy Director, Defense Manpower Data Center, U.S. Department of Defense. See, “Improving the Quality and Timeliness of GI Bill Processing for Student Veterans,” Serial No. 115–18.

#### **Roundtable Discussion—Examining Student Veteran Outcomes and Ways in Which We Can Measure the Quality of Schools**

On June 21, 2017, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity hosted a roundtable to discuss student veteran outcomes and opportunities to measure the quality of schools based on these outcomes.

#### **Site Visit—Providence, RI**

On August 14–15, 2017, the Majority Staff Director and the Professional Staff Member for the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity travelled to Providence, Rhode Island to conduct oversight of the Department of Veterans Affairs’ education programs and to

participate on the legislative panel at the National Association of State Approving Agencies' (NASAA) annual conference.

**Site Visit—Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington**

On August 21–24, 2017, the Majority Staff Director and the Professional Staff Member as well as the Minority Professional Staff Member of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity travelled to Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington (JBLM) to conduct oversight of the Army's Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and to visit Microsoft's Software & Systems Academy for Veterans. During the visit, Subcommittee staff attended various seminars held at JBLM for transitioning servicemembers as well as attended a couple of the transition classes mandated through TAP. Subcommittee staff also met with Army leadership at JBLM to discuss any access issues they are having for servicemembers to attend TAP and how the program can be improved.

**Site Visit—Arlington/Fort Myer, VA**

On September 19, 2017, the Minority Staff Director and the Professional Staff Member for the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity traveled to the Army Soldier for Life-Transition Assistance Program Headquarters to conduct an oversight visit on the Army's transition and Career Skills programs. During the oversight visit, Subcommittee staff met with leadership and received briefings on the program's current capabilities and future scope. Subcommittee staff then traveled to Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall to conduct an oversight visit on Transition Assistance Program classes. Subcommittee staff met with program administrators, watched classes, and met with service members.

**Oversight Hearing—How to Improve Access to GI Bill Approved Apprenticeship Programs and How These Programs Benefit Veterans**

On September 27, 2017, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing on apprenticeship programs approved for GI Bill benefits and how the approval process can be improved to make apprenticeships more accessible to student veterans and employers.

On the first panel and only panel, testimony was provided by: Major General Robert M. Worley II USAF (Ret.), Director, Education Service, Veterans Benefit Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Joseph W. Wescott, Legislative Director, National Association of State Approving Agencies; Mr. Paul Marchand; Executive Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer, Charter Communications; and Mr. Dan Penski, Special Assistant to the General President, International Union of Painters and Allied Trades. See, "How to Improve Access to GI Bill Approved Apprenticeship Programs and How these Programs Benefit Veterans," Serial No. 115–32.

**Site Visit—Phoenix, AZ**

On October 6–8, 2017, the Majority Professional Staff Member for the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity traveled to Phoenix, Arizona to attend the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors' (TAPS) National Military Suicide Seminar and Good Grief

Camp. During the trip, Subcommittee staff was able to examine the services that TAPS provides to grieving families, as well as meet with surviving families to discuss what additional services they need from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

**Oversight Hearing—A Review of the Interagency Transition Assistance Program and the Need for Enhanced Outcome Measurements**

On November 8, 2017, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing of the Transition Assistance Program. During the hearing, the Subcommittee primarily focused on the recently released GAO report, entitled “Transition Veterans—DoD Needs to Improve Performance Reporting and Monitoring for the Transition Assistance Program.” The Subcommittee discussed the need for the improved tracking of outcomes from program participants by the Departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs, and Labor.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: Ms. Cindy Brown Barnes, Director, Education, Workforce and Income Security, U.S. Government Accountability Office; Ms. Margarita Devlin, Executive Director, Benefits Assistance Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department Of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Ivan E. Denton, Director, Office of National Programs, Veterans’ Employment and Training Service, U.S. Department of Labor; and Mr. Judd H. Lyons, Director, Defense Personnel and Family Support Center, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, U.S. Department of Defense.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: Brigadier General Robert Bennett, Adjutant General, United States Army; Rear Admiral Karl O. Thomas, Director, 21st Century Sailor Office, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, United States Navy; Brigadier General Kathleen A. Cook, Director, Air Force Services, Manpower, Personnel and Services, United States Air Force; and Brigadier General Kurt W. Stein, Director, Marine and Family Programs, United States Marine Corps. See, “A Review of the Interagency Transition Assistance Program and the Need for Enhanced Outcome Measurements,” Serial No. 115–XX.

**Oversight Field Hearing—Best Practices in Veterans Education and Transition to Civilian Life (Lubbock, TX)**

On November 17, 2017, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session to conduct an oversight field hearing at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, TX. During the hearing, the Subcommittee primarily focused on best practices for student veterans at Texas Tech University and how schools, community providers and others can assist student veterans in their education and their transition to civilian life.

Testimony was provided by: Dr. Tedd Mitchell, President, Health Sciences Center, Texas Tech University; Mr. Aaron Kyle Chapman, USMC, School of Nursing Veteran Liaison, Health Sciences Center, Texas Tech University; Colonel Lou Ortiz, USAF (Ret.), Director, Military and Veterans Programs, Texas Tech University; Ms. Nicole Meyer, USAF, Student Veteran, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Angelo State University, Mr. Ikaika (Kai) Iuta, USA, Student Veteran, Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, Texas Tech University;

Colonel David J. Lewis, USAF (Ret.), Director of Veterans Services, StarCare Specialty Health System. See, “Best Practices in Veterans Education and Transition to Civilian Life,” Serial No. 115–XX.

#### **Site Visit—Washington, DC**

On November 28, 2017, the Minority Staff Director and the Professional Staff Member for the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity traveled to the National Capital Region Benefits Office to conduct an oversight visit on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Programs. During the oversight visit, Subcommittee staff observed an Orientation Session and intake/counseling sessions for new participants in the program. Subcommittee staff also met with staff and management to discuss any challenges that exist with executing the program and are specific to the National Capital Region. Subcommittee staff followed this visit up with a strategy call on the program’s future with VA Central Office staff on December 4th.

#### **Oversight Hearing—An Update on the Implementation of the Forever GI Bill, the Harry W. Colmery Educational Assistance Act of 2017**

On December 12, 2017, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing to receive an update from the Department of Veterans Affairs about the implementation of the Harry W. Colmery Educational Assistance Act of 2017.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by: Major General Robert M. Worley II USAF (Ret.), Director, Education Service, Veterans Benefit Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs who was accompanied by Mrs. Charmain Bogue, Deputy Director, Education Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Mr. Lloyd Thrower, Acting Information Technology Account Manager, Benefits Portfolio, Office of Information & Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. William Hubbard, Vice President of Government Affairs, Student Veterans of America; Mrs. Kathleen Moakler, Director, External Relations and Policy Analysis, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors. See, “An Update on the Implementation of the Forever GI Bill, the Harry W. Colmery Educational Assistance Act of 2017,” Serial No. 115–XX.

### ACTIVITIES OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

#### *Second Session*

#### LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

#### **Legislative Hearing—Legislative Hearing on: H.R. 1206; H.R. 3023; H.R. 3940; H.R. 4451; H.R. 4830; H.R. 4835; H.R. 5044; and a Draft Bill Entitled, “VA Home Loan Improvement Act of 2018.”**

On March 20, 2018, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on H.R. 1206, Reducing Barriers for Veterans Education Act of 2017; H.R. 3023, to amend title 38, United States Code, to eliminate the authority

of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to pay reporting fees to educational institution; H.R. 3940, Veterans Education Disaster Assistance Act; H.R. 4451, Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Programs Reauthorization Act of 2018; H.R. 4830, SIT-REP Act; H.R. 4835, Job TOOLS for Veterans Act; H.R. 5044, Service-Disabled Veterans Small Business Continuation Act; and a draft bill entitled, "VA Home Loan Improvement Act of 2018."

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Representative Gus Bilirakis of Florida; Representative Brad Wenstrup of Ohio; Representative Ted Poe of Texas; Representative Luke Messer of Indiana; and Representative Steve Russell of Oklahoma.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: MG Robert M. Worley II, USAF (Ret.), Director, Education Service, Veterans Benefit Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs who was accompanied by Mr. Jeffrey London, Director, Loan Guaranty Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. John J. Kamin, Assistant Director, Veterans Employment and Education Division, The American Legion; Ms. Ashlynn Haycock, Manager, Education Services, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors; and Mr. William Hubbard, Vice President of Government Affairs, Student Veterans of America. See, "Legislative hearing on: H.R. 1206; H.R. 3023; H.R. 3940; H.R. 4451; H.R. 4830; H.R. 4835; H.R. 5044; and a draft bill entitled, "VA Home Loan Improvement Act of 2018," Serial No. 115-XX.

**Markup—H.R. 1206; H.R. 3023; H.R. 3940; H.R. 4451; H.R. 4830; H.R. 4835; and H.R. 5044**

On April 11, 2018, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met and marked up: H.R. 1206, the Reducing Barriers for Veterans Education Act of 2017, introduced by Representative Luke Messer of Indiana; H.R. 3023, to amend title 38, United States Code, to eliminate the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to pay reporting fees to educational institution, introduced by Representative Steve Russell of Oklahoma; H.R. 3940, the Veterans Education Disaster Assistance Act, introduced by Representative Ted Poe; H.R. 4451, the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Programs Reauthorization Act of 2018, introduced by Representative Brad Wenstrup of Ohio; H.R. 4830, the Servicemembers Improved Transition through Reforms for Ensuring Progress Act introduced by Representative Gus Bilirakis of Florida; H.R. 4835, Job TOOLS for Veterans Act, introduced by Representative Elizabeth Etsy of Connecticut; and H.R. 5044, the Service-Disabled Veterans Small Business Continuation Act, introduced by Representative Steve Chabot of Ohio.

On April 11, 2018, an amendment to H.R. 4830 was offered by Representative Gus Bilirakis of Florida and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 4830, as amended, passed the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On April 11, 2018, an amendment to H.R. 4451 was offered by Representative Brad Wenstrup of Ohio and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 4451, as amended, passed the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On April 11, 2018, H.R. 1206, H.R. 3023, H.R. 3940, H.R. 4835, and H.R. 5044 were considered by the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity en bloc. H.R. 1206, H.R. 3023, H.R. 3940, H.R. 4835, and H.R. 5044 passed the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity by voice vote and were favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

**Legislative Hearing—A Legislative Hearing on the Following Bills: H.R. 2409; H.R. 5452; H.R. 5538; H.R. 5644; H.R. 5649; and H.R. 5882**

On May 23, 2018, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on the following bills: H.R. 2409, to Allow Servicemembers to Terminate Their Cable, Satellite Television, and Internet Access Service Contracts While Deployed; H.R. 5452, Reduce Unemployment for Veterans of All Ages Act of 2018; H.R. 5538, to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the inclusion of certain additional periods of active duty service for purposes of suspending charges to veterans' entitlement to educational assistance under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs during periods of suspended participation in vocational rehabilitation programs; H.R. 5644, VET OPP Act; H.R. 5649, Navy SEAL Chief Petty Officer William "Bill" Mulder (Ret.) Transition Improvement Act of 2018; and H.R. 5882, Gold Star Spouses Leasing Relief Act.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by: Representative Julia Brownley of California; Representative Scott Peters of California; Representative Brad Wenstrup of Ohio, Representative Cheri Bustos of Illinois; and Representative Ryan Costello of Pennsylvania.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by: Ms. Margarita Devlin, Principal Deputy Undersecretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. John Kamin, Assistant Director, Veterans Employment and Education Division, The American Legion; Ms. Lauren Augustine, Vice President of Government Affairs, Student Veterans of America; and Ms. Rebecca Burgess, Program Manager, Program on American Citizenship, American Enterprise Institute. See, "A legislative hearing on: H.R. 2409; H.R. 5452; H.R. 5538; H.R. 5644; H.R. 5649; and H.R. 5882," Serial No. 115–XX.

**Markup—H.R. 282, H.R. 1690, and H.R. 2772**

On July 12, 2017, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met and marked up: H.R. 282, the "Military Residency Choice Act," introduced by Representative Elise Stefanik of New York; H.R. 1690, the "Department of Veterans Affairs Bonus Transparency Act," introduced by Representative Claudia Tenney of New York; and H.R. 2772, the "VA Senior Executive Accountability Act or the 'SEA Act,'" introduced by Representative Scott Taylor of Virginia.

On July 12, 2017, an amendment to H.R. 1690 was offered by Representative Beto O'Rourke of Texas and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 1690, as amended, passed the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On July 12, 2017, H.R. 282 and H.R. 2772 were considered by the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity en bloc. H.R. 282 and

H.R. 2772 passed the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity by voice vote and were favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

#### OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

##### *Second Session*

##### **Site Visit—Student Veterans of America National Convention, San Antonio, TX**

On January 4–7, 2018, the Majority Staff Director and the Professional Staff Member for the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity travelled to San Antonio, TX to conduct oversight of the Department of Veterans Affairs’ education programs and to participate on the legislative panel at the Student Veterans of America annual conference.

##### **Oversight Hearing—Home Loan Churning Practices and How Veteran Homebuyers Are Being Affected**

On January 10, 2018, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing on the churning of refinanced VA loans and the impact this practice was having on veteran homebuyers and housing market.

Testimony was provided by: Mr. Jeffrey London, Director, Loan Guaranty Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs who was accompanied by: Mr. John Bell, Deputy Director, Loan Guaranty Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Michael R. Bright, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Government National Mortgage Association; Mr. J. David Motley, CMB, President, Colonial Savings, F.A. on behalf of the Mortgage Bankers Association; Mr. Brock Cooper, General Counsel, Veterans United Home Loans. See, “Home Loan Churning Practices and How Veteran Homebuyers are being affected,” Serial No. 115–XX.

##### **Oversight Hearing—Addressing Veteran Homelessness: Current Position; Future Course**

On January 18, 2018, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity and the Subcommittee on Health met in open session to conduct a joint oversight hearing of programs of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Labor (DoL) that assist homeless veterans with a focus on program effectiveness and costs.

On the first panel testimony was provided by: Mr. John F. Clancy, President and Chief Executive Officer, Tristate Veterans Community Alliance; Ms. Angela F. Williams, President and Chief Executive Officer, Easterseals, Inc.; Mr. Stephen Peck, President and Chief Executive Officer, U.S. VETS; Mr. John W. Martin, Development Director, the Opportunity Center; and Ms. Kathryn Monet, Chief Executive Officer, National Coalition for Homeless Veterans.

On the second panel testimony was provided by: Mr. Matt Miller, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Veterans’ Employment and Training Service, U.S. Department of Labor; Ms. Dominique Blom, General Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Public and Indian Housing, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; and Dr. Thomas Lynch M.D., Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Clin-



ical Operations, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs who was Dr. Keith W. Harris Ph.D., Director of Clinical Operations, Homeless Programs Office, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “Addressing Veteran Homelessness: Current Position; Future Course,” Serial No. 115–XX.

**Roundtable Discussion—Examine the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and a Servicemember’s Transition Into Civilian Life**

On January 30, 2018, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a roundtable to review the TAP program. Participants included the military services, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Department of Labor, and representatives from several veteran service organizations.

**Roundtable Discussion—Examine a Servicemember’s Transition Into Civilian Life**

On February 6, 2018, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a roundtable to examine and programs of services provided by community service organizations that help servicemembers transition to civilian life.

**Oversight Hearing—U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Fiscal Year 2019 Budget: Veterans Benefits Administration and the Board of Veterans’ Appeals**

On March 15, 2018, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity and the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs met in open session to conduct a joint oversight hearing of Fiscal Year 2019 budget request for the Veterans Benefit Administration and the Board of Veterans Appeals.

Testimony was provided by: the Honorable Cheryl L. Mason, Chairman, Board of Veterans’ Appeals, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs who was accompanied by: Mr. James E. Manker, Jr., Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Mr. Lloyd Thrower, Deputy Chief Information Officer, Account Manager for Benefits, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Matthew Shuman, Director, Legislative Division, The American Legion; Mr. Shane L. Liermann, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; and Ms. Lauren Augustine, Director of Policy, Student Veterans of America. See, “U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Fiscal Year 2019 Budget: Veterans Benefits Administration and the Board of Veterans’ Appeals,” Serial No. 115–XX.

**Site Visit—Midwestern Education Compact Conference, Chicago, IL**

On May 3–4, 2018, the Majority Staff Director for the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity travelled to Chicago, IL to conduct oversight of the Department of Veterans Affairs’ education programs and to participate on the legislative panel at the Midwestern Education Compact annual conference.

### **Oversight Hearing—A Review of VA’s Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program**

On May 17, 2018, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing of the Department of Veterans Affairs’ Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program. The subcommittee focused on implementation of the new case management system for VR&E claims which had not been completed.

Testimony was provided by: Mr. Jack Kammerer, Director, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs who was accompanied by: Mr. Lloyd Thrower, Deputy Chief Information Officer, Account Manager for Benefits, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Heather Ansley, Esq., MSW, Acting Associate Executive Director of Government Relations, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Ms. Cassandra Vangellow, Esq., Legal and Policy Fellow, Student Veterans of America; and Mr. Shane L. Liermann, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans. See, “Assessing VA Approved Appraisers and How to Improve the Program for the 21st Century,” Serial No. 115–XX.

### **Oversight Hearing—Hiring and Retaining Veterans for the Modern Day Workforce**

On June 26, 2018, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing to examine the hiring and retention of veterans by American companies.

Testimony was provided by: Ms. Elizabeth O’Brien, Senior Director of Military Spouse Programs, Hiring Our Heroes, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation; Brigadier General Gary M. Profit USA (Ret.), Senior Director, Military Programs, Walmart; Mr. Matt Kress, Manager, Veterans and Military Affairs, Starbucks Coffee Company; Mr. Charles J. Sevola Jr., Vice President, Head of Veterans Initiatives, Prudential Financial; Mr. Robert Douthit, Senior Director, Americas Customer Solutions Centers, Dell EMC. See, “Hiring and Retaining Veterans for the Modern Day Workforce,” Serial No. 115–XX.

### **Oversight Hearing—An Update on the Implementation of the Forever GI Bill: Is VA Ready for August 1st**

On July 18, 2018, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing on the implementation of the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017. During the hearing, the subcommittee focused on VA’s efforts to improve IT systems to be able to adjudicate education claims electronically.

Testimony was provided by: Major General Robert M. Worley II USAF (Ret.), Director, Education Service, Veterans Benefit Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs who was accompanied by Mr. Lloyd Thrower, Deputy Chief Information Officer, Benefits Portfolio, Office of Information & Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans, Mrs. Charmain Bogue, Deputy Director, Education Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Daniel McCune, Executive Director, Enterprise Portfolio Management Division, Office of Information and

Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “An Update on the Implementation of the Forever GI Bill: Is VA Ready for August 1st,” Serial No. 115–XX.

**Site Visit—Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Training Conference, Detroit, MI**

On August 8, 2018, the Majority and Minority Staff Directors for the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity travelled to Detroit, MI to conduct oversight of the Department of Veterans Affairs’ vocational rehabilitation and employment program and to participate on the legislative panel at the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment training conference.

**Oversight Hearing—A Review of VA’s Specially Adaptive Housing Grant Programs (SAH)**

On September 6, 2018, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing on the performance of the specially adaptive housing grant program.

Testimony was provided by: Mr. Jeffrey London, Director, Loan Guaranty Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Brigadier General Tom Landwermeyer, USA (Ret.), President and Chief Executive Officer, Homes For Our Troops, Inc.; Mr. Steven Henry, Associate Legislative Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America; and Mr. Ryan Kules, Director of Combat Stress and Recovery, Wounded Warrior Project. See, “A Review of VA’s Specially Adaptive Housing Grant Programs (SAH),” Serial No. 115–XX.

**Site Visit—Regional Processing Office, Muskogee, OK**

On October 24–25, 2018, the Majority and Minority Staff Director for the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity and Legislative Assistant for the Full Committee travelled to Muskogee, OK to conduct oversight of the processing of Post-9/11 GI Bill claims and associated delays that occurred during the fall semester of 2018.

**Oversight Hearing—A Continued Review of GI Bill Payment Delays**

On November 15, 2018, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing on the implementation of the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 and associated payment delays.

Testimony was provided by: The Honorable Paul R. Lawrence Ph.D., Undersecretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefit Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs who was accompanied by: Major General Robert M. Worley II USAF (Ret.), Director, Education Service, Veterans Benefit Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Bill James, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Development and Operations, Office of Information & Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. John J. “Jack” Galvin, Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for Information Technology Operations and Services Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Testimony was also provided by Mr. Richard Crowe, Senior Vice President, Booz Allen Hamilton. See, “A Continued Review of GI Bill Payment Delays,” Serial No. 115–XX.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT &  
INVESTIGATIONS

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

*First Session*

**Legislative Hearing—Legislative Hearing on H.R. 2006; H.R. 2749; H.R. 2781; and, a Draft Bill, to Improve the Hiring, Training, and Efficiency of Acquisition Personnel and Organizations of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for Other Purposes**

On June 29, 2017, the Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on H.R. 2006, the VA Procurement Efficiency and Transparency Act; H.R. 2749, the Protecting Business Opportunities for Veterans Act of 2017; H.R. 2781, the Ensuring Veteran Enterprise Participation in Strategic Sourcing Act; and a draft bill to improve the hiring, training, and efficiency of acquisition personnel and organizations of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

Testimony was provided by Thomas Burgess, Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Logistics and Supply Chain Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, accompanied by Thomas Leney, Executive Director, Small and Veteran Business Programs, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, Department of Veterans Affairs; Kaitlin Gray, Assistant Director, National Veterans Employment and Education Division, The American Legion; Patrick Murray, Associate Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; and Wayne Simpson, Member, National Veterans Small Business Coalition. A statement for the record was provided by Associated General Contractors of America. See “Legislative Hearing on H.R. 2006, H.R. 2749, H.R. 2781, and, a draft bill, to improve the hiring, training, and efficiency of acquisition personnel and organizations of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes,” Serial No. 115–XX.

**Markup—Markup of H.R. 2006, H.R. 2749, H.R. 2781, and H.R. 3169**

On July 12, 2017, the Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations met in open session and marked up H.R. 2006, the VA Procurement Efficiency and Transparency Act; H.R. 2749, the Protecting Business Opportunities for Veterans Act of 2017; H.R. 2781, the Ensuring Veteran Enterprise Participation in Strategic Sourcing Act; and H.R. 3169, the VA Acquisition Workforce Improvement and Streamlining Act.

H.R. 2006, H.R. 2749, H.R. 2781, and H.R. 3169 were each favorably reported to the full committee, without amendment, by voice vote.

OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

*First Session*

**Site Visit—Memphis, Tennessee**

On January 30–February 2, 2017, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations and the Subcommittee

on Health traveled to the Memphis VA Medical Center to examine areas including human resources, union relations, quality management, and credentialing and privileging issues.

#### **Site Visit—Cincinnati, Ohio**

On February 8–10, 2017, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations traveled to the Cincinnati VA Medical Center to investigate the facility's utilization of its nonprofit corporation and management of its research program, as well as the nature of the facility's affiliation with the University of Cincinnati. The Subcommittee also examined the medical center's human resources, controlled substances, sterilization, transplant, mental health, and consult management departments.

#### **Oversight Hearing—Assessing VA's Risks for Drug Diversion**

On February 27, 2017, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing to address oversight of controlled substances and Drug Free Workplace programs at Department of Veterans' Affairs medical centers.

Testimony was provided by Carolyn Clancy, M.D., Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Organizational Excellence, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, accompanied by Michael A. Valentino, R.Ph., MHSA, Chief Consultant, Pharmacy Benefits Management Services, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; Nick Dahl, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Audits and Evaluations, Office of Inspector General, Department of Veterans Affairs, accompanied by Emorfia Valkanos, R.Ph., Health Systems Specialist, Office of Healthcare Inspections, Office of Inspector General, Department of Veterans Affairs; Randall B. Williamson, Director, Healthcare Team, Government Accountability Office; and Keith Berge, M.D., Consultant in Anesthesiology and Chair, Mayo Clinic Enterprise-wide Medication Diversion Prevention Committee. A statement for the record was provided by the American Society of Anesthesiologists. See, "Assessing VA's Risks for Drug Diversion," Serial No. 115–57.

#### **Site Visit—Cleveland, Ohio**

On March 12–14, 2017, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations and the Subcommittee on Health traveled to the Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center to investigate the medical center's management of its research program and utilization of its nonprofit corporation, as well as the nature of its relationship with its academic affiliates. Staff also assessed the medical center's controlled substances and pain management departments, as well as the facility's intermediate care technician program.

#### **Site Visit—Richmond, Virginia**

On March 23, 2017, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations and the Subcommittee on Health traveled to the Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond, Virginia to investigate the medical center's transplant program and its affiliation with Virginia Commonwealth University.

**Site Visit—Washington, DC**

On April 12, 2017, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations traveled to the Washington, DC VA Medical Center to continue investigating the medical center's management of logistics and physical infrastructure, as well as ongoing concerns with the medical center's general operations.

**Site Visit—Washington, DC**

On May 4, 2017, Representative Tim Walz, Representative Ann McLane Kuster, Representative Mark Takano, Representative Gerry Connolly, and minority staff for the Committee on Veterans' Affairs traveled to the Washington, D.C. VA Medical Center to investigate allegations of logistics and supply mismanagement, and patient care delays.

**Site Visit—Boston, Massachusetts**

On April 26–28, 2017, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations and the Subcommittee on Health traveled to the VA Boston Healthcare System to investigate the medical center's management of its research program, as well as the utilization of its nonprofit corporation and the nature of the medical center's relationships with academic affiliates Boston University and Harvard University. Staff also evaluated the facility's pharmacy and pain management departments.

**Site Visit—Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**

On May 8–10, 2017, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations traveled to the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System to investigate the medical center's management of its physical infrastructure, as well as the nature of the facility's affiliation with the University of Pittsburgh and the management of its transplant program. Staff also assessed the medical center's community care, pharmacy, pain management, mental health, human resources, research, and logistics departments.

**Oversight Hearing—VA Financial Management**

On May 24, 2017, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing to evaluate VA financial management policies and practices.

Testimony was provided by Laurie Park, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Finance, Office of Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, accompanied by Mitchel Sturm, Acting Deputy Chief Financial Officer, Veterans Benefits Administration; Beryl Davis, Director, Financial Management and Assurance, Government Accountability Office; Nick Dahl, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Audits and Evaluations, Office of Inspector General, Department of Veterans Affairs, accompanied by Sue Schwendiman, Director, Financial Audit Division, Office of Inspector General, Department of Veterans Affairs; and Julie Larsen, Team Leader, Pension Maintenance Center and Debt Management, The American Legion. See, "VA Financial Management," Serial No. 115–57.

### **Oversight Hearing—VA and Academic Affiliates: Who's Benefiting Now?**

On June 8, 2017, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing to address time spent by VA physicians between the department and its academic affiliates and to discuss the role and utilization of VA nonprofit corporations.

Testimony was provided by Carolyn Clancy, M.D., Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Organizational Excellence, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, accompanied by Rachel Ramoni, M.D., Chief Research and Development Officer, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, and Karen Sanders, M.D., Deputy Chief Academic Affairs Officer, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; Rick Starrs, Chief Executive Officer, National Association of Veterans Research and Education Foundations, accompanied by Nancy Watterson-Diorio, Executive Director, Boston VA Research Institute; and Christopher Colenda, M.D., MPH, President Emeritus, The West Virginia University Health System and Senior Advisor, Veterans Affairs Association of American Medical Colleges. A statement for the record was provided by Christian Kreipke, Ph.D. See, "VA and Academic Affiliates: Who's Benefiting Now?," Serial No. 115-57.

### **Site Visit—Spokane, Washington**

On June 26-29, 2017, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations traveled to the Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center in Spokane, Washington to investigate concerns regarding the medical center's general management, patient satisfaction with their experience at the facility. Other areas of concern included human resources, construction and contracting management, capital asset management, and the emergency medicine department.

### **Joint Oversight Hearing—Joint Subcommittee Hearing of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs and Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations—Examining VA's Processing of Gulf War Illness Claims**

On July 13, 2017, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs and the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a joint hearing to review VA's handling of disability claims by veterans who may have developed medical conditions related to their service in the Southwest Asia theater of operations.

Testimony was provided by Bradley Flohr, Senior Advisor, Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, accompanied by Patrick Joyce, M.D., MPH, Chief, Occupational Health Clinics, Washington VA Medical Center, Department of Veterans Affairs; Melissa Emrey-Arras, Director, Education, Workforce and Income Security, Government Accountability Office, Zachary Hearn, Deputy Director for Claims, Veteran Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Michael Figlioli, Deputy Director, National Veterans Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; and Anthony Hardie, National Board Chair & Director, Veterans for Common Sense. Statements for the record were provided by the National Gulf War Resource Center, Paul

Sullivan, Denise Nichols, and Kirt Love. See, “Examining VA’s Processing of Gulf War Illness Claims,” Serial No. 115–57.

#### **Site Visit—Providence, Rhode Island**

On July 27, 2017, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations traveled to the Providence VA Medical Center to continue oversight into VA healthcare and services, specifically academic affiliates, research, VA nonprofit corporations, the VA graduate medical education programming, and the Choice program.

#### **Field Hearing—VA Home Telehealth: Looking Behind the Numbers**

On August 30, 2017, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a field hearing in Traverse City, Michigan to examine the planning and management of VA telehealth, specifically regarding information technology and the home telehealth program.

Testimony was provided by Kevin Galpin, M.D., Executive Director, Telehealth Services, Office of Connected Care, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, accompanied by Alan R. Constantian, Ph.D, Deputy Chief Information Officer, VHA Account Manager for Clinical Functions, Office of Information & Technology, Department of Veterans Affairs, and Pamela J. Reeves, M.D., Director, John D. Dingell Detroit VA Medical Center, Department of Veterans Affairs; and Thomas Wong, D.O., Senior Physician, Office of Healthcare Inspections, Office of Inspector General, Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “VA Home Telehealth: Looking Behind the Numbers,” Serial No. 115–57.

#### **Site Visit—Las Vegas, Nevada**

On September 11, 2017, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations traveled to the VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System in Las Vegas, Nevada accompanied by VA staff to assess the facility’s management of community care, telehealth, and challenges relating to a growing patient population and difficulties recruiting and retaining staff.

#### **Oversight Hearing—VA Mail Management: The Case of the \$11,257 Package**

On September 12, 2017, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing on problems in the Department of Veterans Affairs’ management of its outgoing mail.

Testimony was provided by John Oswalt, Executive Director for Privacy, Office of Information and Technology, Department of Veterans Affairs; and Lori Rectanus, Director, Physical Infrastructure Issues, Government Accountability Office. See, “VA Mail Management: The Case of the \$11,257 Package,” Serial No. 115–57.

#### **Site Visit—Manchester, New Hampshire**

On September 14–15, 2017, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations traveled to the Manchester, NH VA Medical Center to examine issues including operating room cleanliness, sterile processing of reusable medical equipment, drug diversion, and facilities management.



**Field Hearing—an Assessment of Leadership Failures at the Manchester, NH VA Medical Center**

On September 18, 2017, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a field hearing in Pembroke, New Hampshire to address leadership deficiencies at the VA New England Healthcare System and the Manchester, New Hampshire VA Medical Center.

Testimony was provided by Carolyn Clancy, M.D., Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Organizational Excellence, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, accompanied by Michael Mayo-Smith, M.D., M.P.H., Director, VA New England Healthcare System, Department of Veterans Affairs, and Alfred Montoya, Jr., Acting Director, Manchester, NH VA Medical Center, Department of Veterans Affairs; William E. Kois, M.D., Pain Management Specialist, Manchester, NH VA Medical Center, Department of Veterans Affairs; and David J. Kenney, Chairman, New Hampshire State Veterans Advisory Committee. Statements for the record were provided by several whistleblowers from the Manchester, NH VA Medical Center. See, “An Assessment of Leadership Failures at the Manchester, NH VA Medical Center,” Serial No. 115-57.

**Site Visit—Manchester, New Hampshire**

On September 18, 2017, Minority staff for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations traveled to the Manchester, NH VA Medical Center to examine allegations related to operating room cleanliness, sterile processing of reusable medical equipment, drug diversion, facilities management, and minor construction at the facility.

**Site Visit—Clarksburg, West Virginia**

On September 20–22, 2017, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations and the Subcommittee on Health traveled to the Louis A. Johnson VA Medical Center in Clarksburg, West Virginia to investigate the operation of the medical center’s emergency room, as well as the management of the Privacy Office. Staff also examined other areas including controlled substances, mental health, and human resources, and assessed other ongoing concerns with construction and contracting management.

**Roundtable—Implementation of the Kingdomware Decision in the Veterans First Contracting Program**

On October 11, 2017, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a roundtable discussion on the Veterans First Contracting Program and the implementation of the Kingdomware Supreme Court ruling.

The attendees at the roundtable were: Kaitlin Gray, Assistant Director of Veterans Employment and Education Division, The American Legion; Jordan Howard, Director of Federal and Heavy Construction Division, Associated General Contractors of America; Roger Waldron, President, the Coalition for Government Procurement; LeRoy Acosta, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Lee Ellingburg, Vice President of Government Business and Strategy, Philips Healthcare, Member of Medical Imaging and Technology Alliance; Scott Denniston, Executive Director, National Veteran Small Business Coalition; David

Berteau, President and CEO, Professional Services Council; Phillip Christy, Acting Executive Director of Office of Acquisition Operations, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Jan Frye, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Acquisition and Logistics, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Rick Lemmon, Acting Chief Procurement and Logistics Officer, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Carlos Fuentes, Director of National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars.

**Site Visit—Marion, Illinois**

On October 17–19, 2017, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations traveled to the Marion, Illinois VA Medical Center to investigate numerous concerns regarding its operations and management, including human resources, physical infrastructure management, radiology, quality management, and the community living center.

**Site Visit—Washington, DC**

On November 13, 2017, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations traveled to the Washington, DC VA Medical Center to investigate concerns in areas including sterile processing, research, pharmacy, engineering, and information technology.

**Oversight Hearing—Examining VA’s Failure To Address Provider Quality and Safety Concerns**

On November 29, 2017, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing on the reliability of VA medical centers’ clinical competency reviews and VA’s compliance with reporting clinicians to their respective state licensing boards and the National Practitioner Data Bank.

Testimony was provided by Gerard R. Cox, M.D., M.H.A., Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Organizational Excellence, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, accompanied by Shereef M. Elnahal, M.D., M.B.A., Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health, Quality, Safety, and Value, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Humayun J. Chaudhry, D.O., M.S., M.A.C.P., M.A.C.O.I., President and Chief Executive Officer, Federation of State Medical Boards; and Randall Williamson, Director, Health Care, U.S. Government Accountability Office. See, “Examining VA’s Failure to Address Provider Quality and Safety Concerns,” Serial No. 115–57.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT &  
INVESTIGATIONS

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

*Second Session*

**Legislative Hearing—Legislative Hearing on H.R. 3497; H.R. 4245; a Draft Bill Regarding Purchase Card Misuse; and, a Draft Bill Regarding the Medical Surgical Prime Vendor Program**

On March 7, 2018, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on H.R. 3497, H.R. 4245, a draft bill regarding purchase card misuse,

and a draft bill regarding the Medical Surgical Prime Vendor program.

Testimony was provided by Fred Mingo, Director of Program Control, Program Executive Office, Electronic Health Record Modernization Program, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, accompanied by Ricky Lemmon, Acting Deputy Chief Procurement Officer, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, John Adams, Director of Corporate Travel, Office of Management, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and Katrina Tuisamatatele, Health Portfolio Director, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Louis Celli, Jr., Director, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; and, Scott Denniston, Executive Director, National Veterans Small Business Coalition. See, “Legislative hearing on H.R. 3497, H.R. 4245, a draft bill regarding purchase card misuse, and a draft bill regarding the medical surgical prime vendor program,” Serial No. 115–57.

#### OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

##### *Second Session*

##### **Site Visit—Denver, Colorado**

On January 3–5, 2018, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations traveled to the Denver VA Medical Center and the replacement medical center construction project in Aurora, Colorado to investigate concerns in areas including research, the progress and quality of the construction project, and the transition plan for transferring services from the existing facility to the new facility.

##### **Site Visit—Big Spring, Texas**

On February 20–23, 2018, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations traveled to the Big Spring VA Medical Center to investigate concerns in areas including primary care, the medical center’s affiliations with academic institutions, staffing, and capital asset management.

##### **Site Visit—Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**

On March 27–28, 2018, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations and Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs to the Pittsburgh Regional Office and National Cemetery of the Alleghenies to investigate concerns in areas including staffing, records management, foreign claims and claims management.

On March 29, 2018, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations traveled to VISN 4 in Pittsburgh to investigate concerns in areas including VISN oversight and responsibilities, logistics, contracting, human resources, quality management and patient safety.

##### **Site Visit—Linthicum, Maryland**

On April 12, 2018, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations traveled to the Veterans Integrated Service Network 5 headquarters in Linthicum, Maryland to investigate concerns in areas including logistics and supply chain manage-

ment, staffing, and oversight of the Washington, DC Medical Center's management of supply chain and quality care issues.

#### **Site Visit—Washington State**

On April 18–19, 2018, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations traveled to the Madigan Army Medical Center and Bremerton Naval Hospital to review the implementation challenges experienced by the Department of Defense's MHS GENESIS electronic health record system.

On April 20, 2018, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations conducted a site visit to the American Lake VA Medical Center to review infrastructure issues and the division of labor between that facility and the nearby Seattle VA Medical Center.

#### **Oversight Hearing—VA Logistics Modernization: Examining the RTLS and Catamaran Projects**

On May 8, 2018, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing on two of VA's logistics modernization projects, the Catamaran inventory system and the Real Time Location System (RTLS).

Testimony was provided by Tammy Czarnecki, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Administrative Operations, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, accompanied by Alan Constantian, Deputy Chief Information Officer and Account Manager for Health, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Nicholas Dahl, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Audits and Evaluations, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, accompanied by Michael Bowman, Director for Information Technology and Security Audits Division, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, "VA Logistics Modernization: Examining the RTLS and Catamaran Projects," Serial No. 115–57.

#### **Joint Oversight Hearing—Joint Subcommittee Hearing of the Subcommittee on Health and the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations—VA Research: Focusing on Funding, Findings, and Partnerships**

On May 17, 2018, the Subcommittee on Health and Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing on accountability issues regarding VA partnerships with Nonprofit Research and Education Corporations, academic affiliates, and other entities to administer research funding and conduct and support research efforts; the extent to which VA's research projects and priorities display a concentrated focus on issues and conditions that are specific to or prevalent among the veteran population; and the extent to which VA effectively translates research findings to clinical settings to benefit veteran patients.

Testimony was provided by Robin L. Rusconi J.D., Chair, Board of Directors, National Association of Veterans' Research & Education Foundations; Paul Klotman M.D., President, Chief Executive Officer, and Executive Dean, Baylor College of Medicine, on behalf of Association of American Medical Colleges; Carolyn Clancy M.D., Executive in Charge, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Depart-

ment of Veterans Affairs, accompanied by Rachel B. Ramoni D.M.D., Sc.D., Chief Research and Development Officer, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “VA Research: Focusing on Funding, Findings, and Partnerships,” Serial No. 115–57.

#### **Site Visit—Spokane, Washington**

On May 29–31, 2018, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations and Subcommittee on Health traveled to the Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center to assess that facility’s progress in improving its graduate medical education program.

#### **Joint Oversight Hearing—Joint Subcommittee Hearing of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations and the Committee on Small Business Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations—Achieving Government-Wide Verification of Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Businesses**

On July 17, 2018, the Committee on Small Business Subcommittee on Investigations, Oversight, and Regulations and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing to examine the progress of VA and the Small Business Administration (SBA) in harmonizing definitions and regulations related to service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses (SDVOSBs) and SBA’s readiness to assume the remaining verification functions and the benefits of extending verification of SDVOSBs government-wide.

Testimony was provided by Thomas Leney, Executive Director, Small and Veteran Business Programs, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Robb Wong, Associate Administrator, Office of Government Contracting and Business Development, U.S. Small Business Administration, accompanied by William Gould, Office of Government Contracting & Business Development, U.S. Small Business Administration; and Davy Leghorn, Assistant Director, Veterans Employment and Education Division, The American Legion. See, “Achieving Government-wide Verification of Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Businesses,” Serial No. 115–57.

#### **Roundtable—Roundtable Discussion on Improving the Delivery of Health Care to Veterans in Rural Areas**

On August 9, 2018, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a roundtable discussion on ways VA and community health care providers can increase their coordination to improve community care, rural health, training opportunities for clinicians, and resource sharing.

The attendees at the roundtable were: Carolyn Clancy, MD, Deputy Undersecretary for Discovery, Education & Affiliated Networks, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Thomas Klobucar, PhD, Acting Executive Director, Office of Rural Health, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Kathleen Klink, MD, FAAP, Acting Deputy Chief Officer, Office of Academic Affiliations, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Edward T. Bope, MD, Director, Graduate Medical Education Expansion, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Kenneth Jones, PhD, Acting Chief, Health Professions Education and Director, Associated Health Education, U.S. Department of Vet-

erans Affairs; James W. Rice, Director, Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center; Marie A. DeWitt, MD; Chief of Staff, Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center; Andrea Collins, MSN, RN, Associate Director for Patient Care Services, Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center; Sarah Buckley, RN, BSN, Community Care/Home & Community Based Care Director, Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center; Renee Oshinski, Network Director, Veterans Integrated Service Network 12; Scott Pawlikowski, MD, Deputy Chief Medical Officer—Primary Care Lead, Veterans Integrated Service Network 12; Stuart K. Johnson, DO, FAAFP, Community Assistant Dean, Michigan State University College of Human Medicine—Upper Peninsula Campus; Jerry O. Kooiman, MPA, Assistant Dean, External Relations, Michigan State University College of Human Medicine; Lisa Grill Dodson, MD, Campus Dean—Central Wisconsin, Medical College of Wisconsin; Laura L. Coleman, PhD, President, Bay College; Matt Barron, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Bay College; Gina Wollner, Manager of Business Development & Community Engagement, Bay College—West Campus; Wael Khouli, MD, Chief Medical Officer, UP Health System—Marquette; John J. Schon, MPA, Administrator & CEO, Dickinson County Healthcare System; Floyd Lindholm, Uren-Cooper-Johnson American Legion Post 50, Upper Peninsula Association of American Legion Posts; Frank Lombard, Upper Peninsula Regional Coordinator, Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency & Michigan Association of Counties; Dennis Olson, President, Dickinson County Veterans Affairs Committee; Craig Salo, Service Officer, Marquette County Department of Veterans Affairs; and Joe Stevens, Commissioner, District 1, Dickinson County Board of Commissioners.

#### **Oversight Hearing—Reusable Medical Equipment: Continuing to Examine VHA’s Sterile Processing Problems**

On September 5, 2018, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing on issues with sterile processing of reusable medical equipment (RME) within the Veterans Health Administration.

Testimony was provided by Teresa D. Boyd, D.O., Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Clinical Operations, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, accompanied by Beth Taylor, D.H.A., R.N., N.E.A.-B.C., Deputy Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Clinical Operations, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Sharon Silas, Acting Director, Health Care, U.S. Government Accountability Office; and John Daigh, M.D., Assistant Inspector General for Healthcare Inspections, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, “Reusable Medical Equipment: Continuing to Examine VHA’s Sterile Processing Problems,” Serial No. 115–57.

#### **Site Visit—Bay Pines and Tampa, Florida**

On October 29–November 1, 2018, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations traveled to the CW Bill Young VA Medical Center in Bay Pines, Florida and the James A Haley Veterans Hospital in Tampa, Florida. Staff assessed the facilities’ effectiveness in areas such as mental health and suicide prevention, polytrauma services, and radiology.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON DISABILITY  
ASSISTANCE AND MEMORIAL AFFAIRS

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

*First Session*

**Legislative Hearing—H.R. 105, H.R. 299, H.R. 1328, H.R. 1329,  
H.R. 1390, H.R. 1564, and a Draft Bill Entitled “Quicker  
Veterans Benefits Delivery Act of 2017.”**

On April 5, 2017, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs met in open session and held a legislative hearing on H.R. 105, the Protect Veterans from Financial Fraud Act of 2017; H.R. 299, the Blue Water Vietnam Veterans Act of 2017; H.R. 1328, the American Heroes COLA Act of 2017; H.R. 1329, the Veterans’ Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2017; H.R. 1390, 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. 1564, the VA Beneficiary Travel Act of 2017; and a draft bill entitled “Quicker Veterans Benefits Delivery Act of 2017.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Representative Mike Bost of Illinois; Representative Julia Brownley of California; Representative Jim Banks of Indiana; Representative Jack Bergman of Michigan; and Representative David G. Valadao of California.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Ms. Beth Murphy, Director, Compensation Services, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Murphy was accompanied by Dr. Ralph L. Erickson, Chief Consultant for Post Deployment Health Service, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Ms. Patricia Watts, Director, Legislative and Regulatory Service, National Cemeteries Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Zachary Hearn, Deputy Director, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Mr. Rick Wiedman, Executive Director, Policy and Government Affairs, Vietnam Veterans of America; Mr. Patrick Murray, Associate Director, National Legislative Service; Veterans of Foreign Wars; Mr. Leroy Acosta, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled Veterans of America; and Mr. John B. Wells, Executive Director, Military-Veterans Advocacy, Inc.

A statement for the record was provided by Representative Timothy J. Walz of Minnesota; and the Paralyzed Veterans of America. See, “H.R. 105, H.R. 299, H.R. 1328, H.R. 1329, H.R. 1390, H.R. 1564, and a Draft Bill Entitled “Quicker Veterans Benefits Delivery Act of 2017.” Serial No. 115–11.

**Markup—H.R. 105, H.R. 1328, H.R. 1329, H.R. 1390, H.R. 1564,  
and H.R. 1725**

On April 27, 2017, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs met in open session to markup H.R. 1329, the Veterans’ Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2017, introduced by Representative Mike Bost of Illinois ; H.R. 1390, 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 Representative Jim Banks of Indiana; H.R. 1725, the Quicker Veterans Benefits Delivery Act of 2017, introduced by Representative Timothy J. Walz of Minnesota; H.R. 105, the Protect Veterans from Financial Fraud Act of 2017, introduced by Representative Julia Brownley of California; H.R. 1328, the American Heroes COLA Act of 2017, introduced by Representative Mike Bost of Illinois; and H.R. 1564, the VA Beneficiary Travel Act of 2017, introduced by Representative Jack Bergman of Michigan.

On April 27, 2017, an amendment to H.R. 1329 was offered by Representative Mike Bost of Illinois and was adopted by voice vote. H.R. 1329, as amended, passed the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On April 27, 2017, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1390 was offered by Representative Jim Banks of Indiana. H.R. 1390, as amended, passed the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On April 27, 2017, an amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1725 was offered by Representative Elizabeth Esty of Connecticut. H.R. 1725, as amended, passed the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On April 27, 2017, H.R. 105, introduced by Representative Julia Brownley of California; H.R. 1328, introduced by Representative Mike Bost of Illinois; and H.R. 1564, introduced by Representative Jack Bergman of Michigan were considered en bloc, passed the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote, and were favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

**Legislative Hearing—H.R. 1721, H.R. 1900, H.R. 3122, H.R. 3656, H.R. 3657, and a Draft Bill Entitled “Veterans Fair Debt Notice Act of 2017.”**

On September 13, 2017, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs met in open session and held a legislative hearing on H.R. 1721, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to designate at least one city in the United States each year as an “American World War II City”, and for other purposes; H.R. 1900, the National Veterans Memorial and Museum Act; H.R. 3122, the Veterans Care Financial Protection Act of 2017; H.R. 3656, to establish a consistent applicability date for provision of memorial headstones and markers for eligible non-veteran individuals; H.R. 3657, to expand authority to provide headstones and markers to eligible spouses and dependents in tribal veterans cemeteries; and a draft bill entitled “Veterans Fair Debt Notice Act of 2017.”

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Representative David Rouzer of North Carolina; Representative Steve Stivers of Ohio; Representative Joyce Beatty of Ohio; Representative Matt Cartwright of Pennsylvania; Representative Jim Banks of Indiana; and Representative Chellie Pingree of Maine.



On the second panel, testimony was provided by Ms. Elizabeth H. Curda, Director, Education, Workforce, and Income Security Team, U.S. Government Accountability Office; and Mr. Matthew T. Sullivan, Deputy Under Secretary for Finance and Planning and Chief Financial Officer, National Cemetery Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Sullivan was accompanied by Ms. Roberta Lowe, Director, Office of Internal Controls, Acting Director, Debt Management Center, Office of Management, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Ms. Cheryl Rawls, Director, Pension & Fiduciary Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Alex Zhang, Assistant Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Mr. LeRoy Acosta, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Blake C. Ortner, Deputy Government Relations Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Ms. Kathleen Moakler, Director, Survivor Advocacy, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors; and Mr. John Towles, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service; Veterans of Foreign Wars. Serial No. 115–29.

#### OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

##### *First Session*

##### **Site Visit—Baltimore, Maryland**

On January 26, 2017, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted an oversight visit to the Baltimore Regional Office.

##### **Oversight Hearing—Exploring National Work Queue’s Impact on Claims Processing**

On February 14, 2017, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a hearing to explore National Work Queue’s impact on claims processing.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Thomas J. Murphy, Acting Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. Murphy was accompanied by Mr. Willie C. Clark, Sr., Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Ronald S. Burke, Jr., Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations, National Work Queue, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Zachary Hearn, Deputy Director, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Mr. Ryan M. Gallucci, Deputy Director, National Veterans Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; and Ms. Kelsey Yoon, Director, Veterans Benefits, Vietnam Veterans of America. Serial No. 115–2.

##### **Site Visit—Montgomery, Alabama**

On February 21–23, 2017, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted oversight at the Montgomery Regional Office. Additionally, staff conducted case file review of veterans’ claims.

### **Roundtable Discussion—Appeals**

On March, 28, 2017, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a bipartisan roundtable discussion on the topic of veterans' appeals hosted by DAMA Chairman Mike Bost and DAMA Ranking Member Elizabeth Esty. Attendance included Members of the Majority and Minority of the Subcommittee, Mr. David R. McLenachen, Director, Appeals Management Center, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. David C. Spickler, Executive in Charge/Acting Vice Chairman, Board of Veterans' Appeals, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Cheryl L. Mason, Interim Principal Deputy Vice Chairman, Board of Veterans' Appeals, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Donnie Hachey, Chief Counsel for Operations, Board of Veterans' Appeals, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. James Ridgway, Chief Counsel for Strategy, Innovation, and Program, Board of Veterans' Appeals, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Patrick Littlefield, Executive Director, VA Center for Innovation, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Daniel Bertoni, Managing Director, Physical Infrastructure, U.S. Government Accountability Office; Ms. Melissa Jaynes, Analyst-in-Charge for GAO report, U.S. Government Accountability Office; Mr. Mark Bird, Assistant Director, Information Technology, U.S. Government Accountability Office; Mr. Louis J. Celli, Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Mr. Jim Marszalek, National Services Director, Disabled American Veterans; Ms. Aniela Szymanski, Government Relations Director for Veterans Benefits, Military Officers Association of America; Mr. Ed Zackery, President, National Association of County Veterans Service Officers; Mr. Randy Reeves, President, National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Diane Boyd Rauber, Executive Director, National Organization of Veterans' Advocates; Mr. Ron Abrams, Joint Executive Director, National Veterans Legal Services Program; Mr. Gabriel Stultz, Legislative Counsel, Government Relations, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Ms. Lauren Barefoot, Manager of Training & Quality Assurance, National Veterans Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; and Ms. Kelsey Yoon, Director, Veterans Benefits, Vietnam Veterans of America.

### **Site Visit—Albuquerque, New Mexico**

On May 8–12, 2017, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted oversight at the Albuquerque Regional Office and Santa Fe National Cemetery. Additionally, staff conducted case file review of veterans' claims.

### **Oversight Hearing—Examining VA'S Processing of Gulf War Illness Claims**

On July 13, 2017, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs and the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing to examine VA's processing of Gulf War Illness Claims.

Testimony was provided by Ms. Melissa Emrey-Arras, Director, Education, Workforce and Income Security, U.S. Government Accountability Office; Mr. Zachary Hearn, Deputy Director for Claims, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Mr. Michael S. Figlioli, Deputy Director, National Vet-

erans Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Mr. Anthony Hardie, National Board Chair & Director, Veterans for Common Sense; and Mr. Bradley Flohr, Senior Advisor, Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Flohr was accompanied by Dr. Patrick Joyce, Chief, Occupational Health Clinics, Washington VA Medical Center, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

A statement for the record was provided by Mr. Paul Sullivan, Director of Veteran Outreach, Bergmann & Moore, LLC; Mr. Kirt Love, Director, Desert Storm Battle Registry; and Mr. Robert Brown, President, National Gulf War Resource Center. Serial No. 115–23.

### **Roundtable Discussion—Disability Examinations**

On July 18, 2017, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs a bipartisan roundtable discussion on the topic of disability examinations, hosted by DAMA Chairman Bost and DAMA Ranking Member Esty. Attendance included Members of the Majority and the Minority of the Subcommittee, Ms. Beth Murphy, Director, Compensation Services, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Mary Glenn, Deputy Director for Contract Examinations, Compensation Services, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Patricia Murray, Chief Officer, Office of Disability and Medical Assessment, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Zachary Hearn, Deputy Director of Claims, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Mr. Leroy Acosta, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Steven Henry, Associate Director of Field Services, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Mr. Brad Hazell, Assistant Director, Compensation and Pension Policy, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Ms. Kelsey Yoon, Director, Veterans Benefits, Vietnam Veterans of America; Mr. Grant Kim, Chief Executive Officer, QTC Management, Inc.; and Ms. Jessalyn Viera, Chief Operating Officer, Veterans Evaluation Services, Inc.

### **Oversight Hearing—PTSD Claims: Assessing Whether VBA Is Effectively Serving Veterans**

On July 25, 2017, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a hearing to assess whether VBA is effectively serving veterans that apply for a disability claim based on PTSD.

Testimony was provided by Mr. Gerardo Avila, Deputy Director, Medical Evaluation Board, Physical Evaluation Board, and Department of Defense Correction Board, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Mr. Martin Caraway, Associate Member and National Partner, National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Ronald S. Burke, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary, Office for Field Operations, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Burke was accompanied by Mr. Bradley Flohr Senior Advisor, Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Patricia Murray, Chief Officer, Office of Disability and Medical Assessment, Veterans

Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Dr. Stacey Pollack, National Director, Program Policy Implementation, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Serial No. 115–26.

#### **Site Visit—Waco, Texas**

On July 31, 2017, to August 4, 2017, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted oversight at the Waco Regional Office and Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery. Staff also toured the Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery. Additionally, staff conducted case file review of veterans' claims.

#### **Site Visit—San Juan, Puerto Rico**

On August 16, 2017, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted oversight at the San Juan Regional Benefits Office and Puerto Rico National Cemetery. Additionally, staff conducted case file review of veterans' claims.

#### **Oversight Hearing—Examining How VBA Can Effectively Prevent and Manage Overpayments**

On October 25, 2017, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a hearing to explore how the Department is managing overpayments to veterans who receive disability compensation or pension benefits.

Testimony was provided by Mr. David G. Spivey, Deputy Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Mr. Shane L. Liermann, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Mr. John Towles, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; and Mr. Willie C. Clark, Sr., Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. Clark was accompanied by Ms. Beth Murphy, Director, Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Ms. Roberta Lowe, Acting Director, Debt Management Center, Office of Management, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, "Examining How VBA Can Effectively Prevent and Manage Overpayments." Serial No. 115–XX.

#### **Site Visit—Tijuana, Mexico**

On October 5–6, 2017, Representative Mark Takano, Representative Kathleen Rice, Representative Luis Correa, Delegate Gregorio Kili Camacho Sablan, Representative Norma Torres, and minority staff for the Subcommittee Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs traveled to Tijuana, Mexico to meet with U.S. military veterans who have been deported, and to conduct fact finding on the impediments faced by deported veterans to accessing their veterans benefits.

#### **Site Visit—Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

On October 18–20, 2017, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted oversight at

the Philadelphia Regional Office. Additionally, staff conducted a case file review of a veteran's claim.

#### **Site Visit—Wilmington, Delaware**

On October 20, 2017, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted oversight at the Wilmington Regional Office.

#### **Roundtable Discussion—Appeals Modernization**

On November 30, 2017, Majority and Minority Staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs led a bipartisan roundtable discussion on the topic of appeals reform. Attendance included Staff of the Majority and Minority of the Subcommittee, Staff of the Majority and Minority of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs; David C. Spickler, Executive in Charge/Acting Vice Chairman, Board of Veterans' Appeals, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. David R. McLenachen, Director, Appeals Management Office, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Lloyd Thrower, Deputy CIO, IT Account Manager for Benefits, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Brian Griffin, Deputy Chief Counsel, Benefits Law Group, Office of General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Elizabeth H. Curda, Director, Education, Workforce, and Income Security, U.S. Government Accountability Office; Mr. Jamie Whitcomb, Senior Analyst, Education, Workforce, and Income Security, U.S. Government Accountability Office; Mr. David G. Spivey, Deputy Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Mr. Duayne Driscoll, Deputy National Service Director, AMVETS; Mr. Jim Marszalek, National Service Director, Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Martin Caraway, 1st Vice President, National Association of County Veterans Service Officers; Mr. James Prosser, Assistant Secretary for Veterans Affairs, North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Diane Boyd Rauber, Executive Director, National Organization of Veterans' Advocates; Mr. Barton F. Stichman, Joint Executive Director, National Veterans Legal Services Program; Ms. Aniela Szymanski, Deputy Director for Veterans Benefits, Government Relations, Military Officers Association of America; Mr. Jamie Rudert, Associate General Counsel, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Mr. Ryan M. Gallucci, Director, National Veterans Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Ms. Kelsey Yoon, Director, Veterans Benefits Program, Vietnam Veterans of America; Mr. Nicholas Holtz, Digital Services Expert, Appeals Lead, United States Digital Service; and Mr. Chris Given, Digital Services Expert, Data Lead, United States Digital Service.

#### **Site Visit—Bethesda, Maryland**

On December 4, 2017, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Chairman Mike Bost led a Congressional Delegation to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. Subcommittee Chairman Mike Bost and Representative Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen of American Samoa traveled to Bethesda, Maryland to conduct oversight of the Walter Reed National Mili-

tary Medical Center's Integrated Disability Evaluation System. Chairman Mike Bost and Representative Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen met with service members undergoing the medical retirement/separation process via the Integrated Disability Evaluation System. Chairman Bost and Representative Radewagen also received briefings on the Amputee Patient Care program and the Service Element Wounded Warrior program. Additionally, Chairman Mike Bost and Representative Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen toured the Military Advanced Training Center, the Fisher House, and the National Intrepid Center of Excellence.

**Oversight Hearing—Pre-Discharge Claims Programs: Are VA and DOD Effectively Serving Separating Military Personnel**

On December 13, 2017, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a hearing to explore how the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs are managing Integrated Disability Evaluation System, Benefits Delivery at Discharge, and Quick Start claims.

Testimony was provided by Dr. Terry A. Adirim, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Services Policy and Oversight, U.S. Department of Defense; Mr. Gerardo Avila, Deputy Director, Medical Evaluation Board/Physical Evaluation Board/Department of Defense Correction Board, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Mr. Ryan M. Gallucci, Director, National Veterans Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; and Mr. Willie C. Clark, Sr., Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. Clark was accompanied by Ms. Beth Murphy, Director, Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Ms. Patricia Murray, Chief Officer, Office of Disability and Medical Assessment, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See, "Pre-Discharge Claims Programs: Are VA and DOD Effectively Serving Separating Military Personnel." Serial No. 115–XX.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON DISABILITY  
ASSISTANCE AND MEMORIAL AFFAIRS

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

*Second Session*

**Legislative Hearing—H.R. 888, H.R. 4335, H.R. 4910, and H.R. 4958**

On Tuesday, March 20, 2018, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs met in open session and held a legislative hearing on H.R. 888, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of certain totally disabled veterans; H.R. 4335, the Servicemember Family Burial Act; H.R. 4910, the Veterans Cemetery Benefit Correction Act; and, H.R. 4958, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2018.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Representative Mike Bost of Illinois; Representative J. Luis Correa of California; and, Representative Austin Scott of Georgia.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Ms. Cheryl Rawls, Director, Pension & Fiduciary Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Rawls was accompanied by Ms. Lisa J. Pozzebon, Executive Director, Office of Cemetery Operations, National Cemetery Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Additionally, testimony was provided by Mr. Larry L. Lohmann, Assistant Director, National Legislative Division, The American Legion; and, Mr. Carlos Fuentes, Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars.

A statement for the record was provided by Representative Walter B. Jones of North Carolina; and the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. See, “Legislative Hearing on H.R. 888, H.R. 4335, H.R. 4910, and H.R. 4958.” Serial No. 115–XX.

**Legislative Hearing—H.R. 4312, H.R. 6409, and H.R. 6420.**

On Tuesday, September 5, 2018, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs met in open session and held a legislative hearing on H.R. 4312, the Fallen Warrior Battlefield Cross Memorial Act; H.R. 6409, the Honoring Veterans’ Families Act; and, H.R. 6420, To permit the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a grant program to conduct cemetery research and produce educational materials for the Veterans Legacy Program.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Representative James B. Renacci Ohio; Representative Doug LaMalfa of California; and, Representative Conor Lamb of Pennsylvania.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Matthew T. Sullivan, Deputy Under Secretary for Finance and Planning and Chief Financial Officer, National Cemetery Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Sullivan was accompanied by Dr. Bryce A. Carpenter, Program Manager, Veterans Legacy Program, National Cemetery Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Additionally, testimony was provided by Mr. Greg Nembhard, Assistant Director, Claims Discharge Upgrade, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; and, Mr. Carlos Fuentes, Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars.

A statement for the record was provided by Disabled American Veterans. See, “Legislative Hearing on H.R. 4312, H.R. 6409, and H.R. 6420.” Serial No. 115–XX.

OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

*Second Session*

**Joint Oversight Hearing—U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Fiscal Year 2019 Budget: Veterans Benefits Administration and the Board of Veterans’ Appeals**

On Thursday, March 15, 2018, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs and the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a hearing to examine the Department of Veteran Affairs’ budget request for Fiscal Year 2019 for the Veterans Benefits Administration and the Board of Veterans’ Appeals.

Testimony was provided by The Honorable Cheryl L. Mason, Chairman, Board of Veterans’ Appeals, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Mason was accompanied by Mr. James E.

Manker, Jr., Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and, Mr. Lloyd Thrower, Deputy Chief Information Officer, Account Manager for Benefits, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Additionally, testimony was provided by Mr. Matthew J. Shuman, Director, Legislative Division, The American Legion; Mr. Shane L. Liermann, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; and, Ms. Lauren Augustine, Director of Policy, Student Veterans of America. See, “U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Fiscal Year 2019 Budget: Veterans Benefits Administration and the Board of Veterans’ Appeals.” Serial No. 115–XX.

**Site Visit—Little Rock, Arkansas**

On January 30, 2018 to February 2, 2018, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted oversight at the Little Rock Regional Office and Little Rock National Cemetery. Additionally, staff conducted case file review of veterans’ claims.

**Site Visit—Atlanta, Georgia**

On February 20, 2018, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs and Majority staff of the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee conducted bicameral oversight at the Atlanta Regional Office and the Georgia National Cemetery.

**Site Visit—U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims—Washington, District of Columbia**

On March 5, 2018, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs observed the oral argument before the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims in the case of the Monk v. Shulkin.

**Site Visit—Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**

On March 27–28, 2018, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs and Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations conducted oversight at the Pittsburgh Regional Office and the National Cemetery of the Alleghenies.

**Site Visit—Board of Veterans’ Appeals—Washington, District of Columbia**

On April 12, 2018, Majority and Minority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs and Majority and Minority staff of the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee attended a briefing with the Chairman of the Board of Veterans’ Appeals and an expert from United States Digital Service on updates to the Department of Veterans Affairs’ website that would better enable veterans to determine the status of their appeal.

**Oversight Hearing—Review of VA’s Life Insurance Programs**

On Wednesday, April 25, 2018, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a hearing to explore VA’s ad-



ministration of life insurance programs for veterans and active duty servicemembers.

Testimony was provided by Mr. Robert Reynolds, Deputy Under Secretary for Disability Assistance, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Reynolds was accompanied by Mr. Vincent E. Markey, Director, Insurance Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Additionally, testimony was provided by Mr. Jeff Steele, Assistant Director, National Legislative Division, The American Legion; and, Mr. Ken Wiseman, Associate Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars. See, “Review of VA’s Life Insurance Programs.” Serial No. 115–XX.

#### **Oversight Hearing—Honoring Heroes: Memorializing Our Nation’s Veterans**

On Thursday, June 7, 2018, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a hearing to review cemeteries managed by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the American Battle Monuments Commission.

Testimony was provided by The Honorable Randy C. Reeves, Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, National Cemetery Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Reeves was accompanied by Mr. Ronald E. Walters, Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, National Cemetery Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Additionally, testimony was provided by The Honorable William M. Matz, Jr., Secretary, American Battle Monuments Commission; Mr. Gerardo Avila, Deputy Director, Medical Evaluation Board/Physical Evaluation Board/Department of Defense Correction Board, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; and, Mr. Ken Wiseman, Associate Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars. See, “Honoring Heroes: Memorializing Our Nation’s Veterans.” Serial No. 115–XX.

#### **Roundtable—Burn Pits and Potential Toxic Exposures: Establishing Links to Benefits and Health Care**

On Wednesday, July 18, 2018, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs and the Subcommittee on Health held a bipartisan roundtable discussion to discuss barriers to health care and benefits through the Department of Veterans Affairs for veterans who may have been exposed to burn pits during service in the Armed Forces, hosted by DAMA Chairman Mike Bost, DAMA Ranking Member Elizabeth Esty, Health Chairman Neal Dunn, and Health Ranking Member Julia Brownley. Attendance included House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs Chairman Phil Roe; Members of the Majority and Minority of the Subcommittees; Representative Raul Ruiz of California; Dr. Loren Erickson, Chief Consultant, Post Deployment Health Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Drew Helmer, Director, War Related Illness and Injury Study Center and Airborne Hazards Center of Excellence, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Vincent Mitchell, Program Analyst, Post-9/11 Era Environmental Health Program, Post Deployment Health Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Beth Mur-

phy, Director, Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Bradley Flohr, Senior Advisor, Director of Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Carlos Fuentes, Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Mr. Thomas Porter, Legislative Director, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; Mr. Derek Fronabarger, Director, Legislative Affairs, Wounded Warrior Project; Ms. Cathy Wiblemo, Associate Director, Vietnam Veterans of America; Mr. Tom Berger, Member, Veterans Health Council, Vietnam Veterans of America; Mr. Roscoe Butler, Deputy Director for Health Care, The American Legion; Ms. René A. Campos, Senior Director, Government Relations for Veterans-Wounded Warrior Care, Military Officers Association of America; Mr. Walter Sweeney, Lead, Toxic Exposure Initiative, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors; Ms. Rosie Torres, Co-founder and Executive Director, Burn Pits 360; Ms. Lauren Price, Founder and Managing Director, Veteran Warriors; Ms. Roberta Wedge, Senior Program Officer, Health and Medicine Division, The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; and, Mr. Guy LoFaro, Assistant Director, Defense Capabilities and Management, Government Accountability Office.

**Site Visit—Reno, Nevada and Sacramento, California**

On July 30, 2018 to August 3, 2018, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted oversight at the Reno Regional Office and Sacramento Valley National Cemetery. Additionally, staff conducted case file review of veterans' claims.

**Site Visit—Newark, New Jersey**

On August 6–10, 2018, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted oversight at the Newark Regional Office. Additionally, staff conducted case file review of veterans' claims.

**Site Visit—Pittsburg, Pennsylvania**

On August 6, 2018, Minority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted oversight at the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Regional Benefits Office and Cemetery of the Alleghenies.

**Site Visit—Veterans Benefits Administration—Washington, District of Columbia**

On August 27, 2018, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs and Majority and Minority staff of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee attended a briefing on VBA's disability contract examination office.

**Site Visit—St. Paul, Minnesota**

On August 28–30, 2018, Minority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted oversight at the St. Paul, Minnesota Regional Benefits Office and the Ft. Snelling National Veterans Cemetery.

**Site Visit—Arlington National Cemetery—Arlington, Virginia**

On September 6, 2018, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs attended the Millennium Expansion Dedication Ceremony.

**Site Visit—Boston, Massachusetts**

On September 17–21, 2018, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted oversight at the Boston Regional Office. Additionally, staff conducted case file review of veterans' claims.

**Site Visit—Veterans Benefits Administration—Washington, District of Columbia**

On September 18, 2018, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs attended a briefing with the Under Secretary for Benefits on the VA's plans to address issues identified in three recent Office of Inspector General reports on unwarranted medical reexaminations for disability benefits, processing inaccuracies involving veterans' intent to file submissions for benefits, and denied posttraumatic stress disorder claims related to military sexual trauma.

**Roundtable—Enewetak Atoll Cleanup: Potential Radiation Exposure**

On Wednesday, September 26, 2018, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a bipartisan roundtable discussion on the Enewetak Atoll cleanup and potential radiation exposure, hosted by DAMA Chairman Mike Bost and DAMA Ranking Member Elizabeth Esty. Attendance included Members of the Majority and Minority of the Subcommittees; Representative Grace Meng of New York; Representative Madeleine Z. Bordallo of Guam; Mr. Brian Condon, Assistant Director, Veterans Programs, Fleet Reserve Association; Mr. Harry B. Daniel II, Veteran; Mr. John Baenen, Veteran; Mr. Kenneth Brownell, Veteran; Mr. Keith Kiefer, National Commander, National Association of Atomic Veterans; Mr. Greg Nembhard, Deputy Director, Claims Services, The American Legion; Dr. David A. Butler, Scholar; Director, Office of Military and Veterans Health, Health and Medicine Division, The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; Dr. Charles Ferguson, Director, Nuclear and Radiation Studies Board, Division of Earth and Life Studies, The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; Dr. Michael Kuliasha, Director, Nuclear Technologies Department, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, U.S. Department of Defense; Dr. Paul Blake, Lead, Nuclear Test Personnel Review Program, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, U.S. Department of Defense; Ms. Beth Murphy, Director, Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Bradley Flohr, Special Advisor, Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and, Mr. Carlos Fuentes, Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars.

**Site Visit—Denver, Colorado and Colorado Springs, Colorado**

On October 15–18, 2018, Majority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted oversight at the Denver Regional Office, Denver Training Facility, and Pikes Peak National Cemetery. Additionally, staff conducted case file review of veterans' claims.

**Site Visit—Nashville, Tennessee**

On October 24–25, 2018, Minority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted oversight at the Nashville, Tennessee Regional Benefits Office and the Nashville National Veterans Cemetery.

**Site Visit—Nashville, Tennessee**

On October 25–26, 2018, Minority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted oversight at the Jackson, Mississippi Regional Benefits Office and the Corinth National Veterans Cemetery.

**Site Visit—Board of Veterans' Appeals—Washington, District of Columbia**

On October 26, 2018, Majority and Minority staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs and Majority and Minority staff of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee attended a briefing with the Chairman of the Board of Veterans' Appeals on VA's progress implementing appeals modernization as well as the status of the Rapid Appeals Modernization Program.

**Oversight Hearing—Exploring VA's Oversight of Contract Disability Examinations**

On Thursday, November 15, 2018, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a hearing to examine VA's oversight of disability examinations conducted by contract medical examiners.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Ms. Margarita Devlin, Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Devlin was accompanied by Ms. Beth Murphy, Director, Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mary Glenn, Deputy Director, Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and, Mr. Phillip W. Christy, Deputy Executive Director, Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Additionally, testimony was provided by Ms. Elizabeth H. Curda, Director, Education, Workforce, and Income Security Team, U.S. Government Accountability Office.

A statement for the record was provided by Veterans of Foreign Wars. See, "Exploring VA's Oversight of Contract Disability Examinations." Serial No. 115–XX.

### **Oversight Hearing—VA’s Development and Implementation of Policy Initiatives**

On Thursday, November 29, 2018, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a hearing to evaluate VA’s methods for developing and implementing policy changes and initiatives to better process claims.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by The Honorable Paul R. Lawrence, Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Lawrence was accompanied by Mr. Willie C. Clark, Sr., Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and, Ms. Beth Murphy, Director, Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Additionally, testimony was provided by The Honorable Michael J. Missal, Inspector General, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Matthew J. Shuman, Director, Legislative Division, The American Legion; Mr. Shane L. Liermann, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; and, Mr. Carlos Fuentes, Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars. See, “VA’s Development and Implementation of Policy Initiatives.” Serial No. 115–XX.

### **ACTIVITIES OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY MODERNIZATION<sup>3</sup>**

#### *Second Session*

#### **Site Visit—Fort Wayne, Indiana**

On August 1–2, 2018, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Technology Modernization traveled to the Fort Wayne VA Medical Center to collect information on the facility’s configuration and use of the Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VistA) and Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS) as well as on the staff’s views of such systems and needs in a forthcoming electronic health record replacement. Subcommittee Chairman Jim Banks joined the oversight visit on August 2, 2018.

#### **Site Visit—Seattle, Washington**

On August 29–30, 2018, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Technology Modernization and Chairman Jim Banks traveled to the Seattle VA Medical Center, one of the initial implementation sites for the Department of Veterans Affairs’ Electronic Health Record Modernization program, to assess the facility’s readiness for the implementation. Staff and Chairman Banks also travelled to nearby Bremerton Naval Hospital, one of the Defense Department’s initial operating capability sites for its Military Health System Genesis electronic health record program, to observe the system post-implementation and gather lessons learned.

<sup>3</sup>The Subcommittee on Technology Modernization, which was established on July 12, 2018, does not have legislative jurisdiction.

**Oversight Hearing—The Role of the Interagency Program Office in VA Electronic Health Record Modernization**

On September 13, 2018, the Subcommittee on Technology Modernization held a hearing to examine the management structure of the Electronic Health Record Modernization program and the suitability and performance of the Interagency Program Office to serve as the single point of accountability for efforts to achieve electronic health record interoperability between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense.

Testimony was provided by Dr. Lauren Thompson, Director of the Interagency Program Office, U.S. Department of Defense, accompanied by Dr. Helga Rippen, Deputy Director of the Interagency Program Office, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. John Windom, Acting Chief Health Information Officer and Program Executive Officer, Office of Electronic Health Record Modernization, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Ms. Carol Harris, Director of Information Technology Acquisition Management Issues, U.S. Government Accountability Office. See, “The Role of the Interagency Program Office in VA Electronic Health Record Modernization,” Serial No. 115–XX.

**Oversight Hearing—180-Day Review of the Electronic Health Record Modernization Program**

On November 14, 2018, the Subcommittee on Technology Modernization held a hearing to examine the Electronic Health Record Modernization program’s activities and accomplishments throughout its first 180 days, and to review its planned activities over the course of 2019.

Testimony was provided by Mr. John Windom, Executive Director, Office of Electronic Health Record Modernization, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, accompanied by Dr. Laura Kroupa, Acting Chief Medical Officer, Office of Electronic Health Record Modernization, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and Mr. John Short, Chief Technology Integration Officer, Office of Electronic Health Record Modernization, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Travis Dalton, President of Government Services, Cerner Corporation. See, “180-Day Review of the Electronic Health Record Modernization Program,” Serial No. 115–XX.

**Site Visit—Spokane, Washington**

On December 2–3, 2018, Majority staff for the Subcommittee on Technology Modernization and Representative Jack Bergman traveled to the Spokane VA Medical Center, one of the initial implementation sites for the Department of Veterans Affairs’ Electronic Health Record Modernization program, to assess the facility’s readiness for the implementation.