

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF  
THE ACTIVITIES  
of the  
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
of the  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

During the  
ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

Pursuant to  
CLAUSE 1(D) RULE XI OF THE RULES OF THE HOUSE  
OF REPRESENTATIVES



December 19, 2013 Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the  
State of the Union and ordered to be printed

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Helen W. Tolar, *Staff Director and Chief Counsel* (January 2013 – September 2013)  
Jon Towers, *Staff Director* (September 2013 – Present)

Nancy Dolan, *Democratic Staff Director*

\*The House received a communication from the Honorable Mark E. Amodei. Mr. Amodei submitted his resignation from the Committees on the Judiciary, Natural Resources, and Veterans' Affairs. The resignations were accepted without objection.

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## COMMITTEE STAFF

HELEN W. TOLAR, *Staff Director and Chief Counsel (January 2013- September 2013)*  
NANCY DOLAN, *Democratic Staff Director*  
JONATHAN A. TOWERS, *Deputy Staff Director (January 2013-September 2013) / Staff Director (September 2013-Present)*  
DAVID M. TUCKER, *Democratic Deputy Staff Director and Chief Counsel;*  
KELSEY BARON, *Staff Assistant (January 2013 – December 2013) / Research Assistant, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity (December 2013 – Present)*  
CAROLYN BLAYDES, *Executive & Legislative Assistant*  
MICHAEL F. BRINCK *Staff Director, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity (January 2013 - September 2013) / Deputy Staff Director (September 2013 – Present)*  
JUSTIN BROWN, *Democratic Staff Director, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs*  
CURT CASHOUR, *Communications Director*  
JONATHAN A. CLARK, *Professional Staff Member, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity*  
BERNADINE N. DOTSON, *Financial Administrator & Printing Clerk*  
DOLORES A. DUNN, *Staff Director, Subcommittee on Health*  
JESSICA G. EGGIMANN, *Chief Clerk, Office Manager, and Legislative Coordinator*  
ELBY A. GODWIN, *Professional Staff Member, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations (January 2013 – March 2013)*  
EDWARD GILMAN, *Democratic Communications Director*  
SAMANTHA E. GONZALEZ, *Professional Staff Member, Subcommittee on Health*  
ERIC E. HANNEL, *Staff Director, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations*  
JON HODNETTE, *Investigative Counsel, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations*  
JUAN LARA, *Democratic Staff Director and Counsel, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity and the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations*  
ROB MCQUADE, *Counsel, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations (January 2013 - August 2013)*  
MARY ASHLEY MILLER, *Staff Assistant (December 2013-January 2013)*  
CAROL S. MURRAY, *Democratic Legislative Coordinator and Office Manager*  
MEGAN OLMSTEAD, *Research Assistant and Counsel, Subcommittee on Health (October 2013 - Present)*  
HAROLD REES, *Senior Investigative Counsel*  
RORY RILEY, *Staff Director and Counsel, Subcommittee Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs*  
LAUREN ROGAN, *Professional Staff Member and Counsel, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs*  
MICHAEL N. SIEGEL, *Press Assistant*  
CATHLEEN C. WIBLEMO, *Democratic Staff Director, Subcommittee on Health*  
JIAN IZA C. ZAPATA, *Democratic Professional Staff Member for the Subcommittees on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs and the Subcommittee on Health (January 2013- October 2013)*

**LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
*Washington, DC, December 19, 2013*

Hon. KAREN L. HAAS  
*Clerk of the House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.*

DEAR MS. HAAS: In accordance with clause 1(d) of Rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, I submit herewith the report of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs setting forth its activities in reviewing and studying the application, administration, and execution of those laws, the subject matter of which is within the jurisdiction of our committee.

Sincerely,



JEFF MILLER,  
*Chairman*

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

## REPORT

### JURISDICTION OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

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

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

### RULES OF THE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

#### **RULE 1 – GENERAL PROVISIONS**

(a) **APPLICABILITY OF HOUSE RULES** – The Rules of the House are the rules of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and its subcommittees so far as applicable, except that a motion to recess from day to day, and a motion to dispense with the first reading (in full) of a bill or resolution, if printed copies are available, are non-debatable privileged motions in Committees and subcommittees.

(b) **SUBCOMMITTEES** – Each subcommittee of the Committee is a part of the Committee and is subject to the authority and direction of the Committee and to its rules so far as applicable.

(c) **INCORPORATION OF HOUSE RULE ON COMMITTEE PROCEDURE** – Rule XI of the Rules of the House, which pertains entirely to Committee procedure, is incorporated and made part of the rules of the Committee to the extent applicable. Pursuant to clause 2(a)(3) of Rule XI of the Rules of the House, the Chairman of the full Committee is directed to offer a motion under clause 1 of Rule XXII of the Rules of the House whenever the Chairman considers it appropriate.

(d) VICE CHAIRMAN – Pursuant to clause 2(d) of Rule XI of the Rules of the House, the Chairman of the full Committee shall designate the Vice Chairman of the Committee.

## **RULE 2 – REGULAR AND ADDITIONAL MEETINGS**

(a) REGULAR MEETINGS – The regular meeting day for the Committee shall be at 10 a.m. on the second Wednesday of each month in such place as the Chairman may designate. However, the Chairman may dispense with a regular Wednesday meeting of the Committee.

(b) ADDITIONAL MEETINGS – The Chairman of the Committee may call and convene, as he considers necessary, additional meetings of the Committee for the consideration of any bill or resolution pending before the Committee or for the conduct of other Committee business. The Committee shall meet for such purpose pursuant to the call of the Chairman.

(c) NOTICE – The Chairman shall notify each member of the Committee of the agenda of each regular and additional meeting of the Committee at least 24 hours before the time of the meeting, except under circumstances the Chairman determines to be of an emergency nature. Under such circumstances, the Chairman shall make an effort to consult the ranking minority member, or in such member's absence, the next ranking minority party member of the Committee.

## **RULE 3 – MEETINGS AND HEARINGS GENERALLY**

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

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

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

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

(e) REQUIREMENTS FOR TESTIMONY



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

(2) Pursuant to clause 4 of Rule XI of the Rules of the House, in the case of a witness appearing in a non-governmental capacity a written statement of proposed testimony shall include a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source (by agency and program) of any Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) received during the current fiscal year or either of the two preceding fiscal years by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness.

#### (f) CALLING AND QUESTIONING WITNESSES

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

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

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

(g) SUBPOENAS – Pursuant to clause 2(m) of Rule XI of the Rules of the House, a subpoena may be authorized and issued by the Committee or a subcommittee in the conduct of any

investigation or series of investigations or activities, only when authorized by a majority of the members voting, a majority being present.

**(h) NOTICE REQUIREMENTS –**

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

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

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

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

**RULE 4 – QUORUM AND RECORD VOTES; POSTPONEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS**

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

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

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

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

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

## **RULE 5 – SUBCOMMITTEES**

(a) ESTABLISHMENT AND JURISDICTION –

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

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

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

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

(D) Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, which shall have oversight and investigative jurisdiction over veterans' matters generally, information technology, procurement, and over such matters as may be referred to the subcommittee by the Chairman of the full Committee for its oversight or investigation and for its appropriate recommendations. The subcommittee shall have legislative jurisdiction over such bills or resolutions as may be referred to it by the Chairman of the full Committee. Provided, however, that the activities of the Subcommittee shall in no way limit the responsibility of the other subcommittees of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs for carrying out their oversight duties.

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

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

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

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

(e) POWERS AND DUTIES –

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

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

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

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

## **RULE 6 – GENERAL OVERSIGHT RESPONSIBILITY**

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

(1) Its analysis, appraisal, evaluation of –

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **RULE 7 – BUDGET ACT RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

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

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

## **RULE 8 – RECORDS AND OTHER MATTERS**

(a) **TRANSCRIPTS** – There shall be a transcript made of each regular and additional meeting and hearing of the Committee and its subcommittees. Any such transcript shall be a substantially verbatim account of remarks actually made during the proceedings, subject only to technical, grammatical, and typographical corrections authorized by the person making the remarks involved.

(b) **RECORDS** –

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

(2) There shall be kept in writing a record of the proceedings of the Committee and each of its subcommittees, including a record of the votes on any question on which a recorded vote is demanded. The result of each such record vote shall be made available by the Committee for inspection by the public at reasonable times in the offices of the Committee. Information so available for public inspection shall include a description of the amendment, motion, order or other proposition and the name of each member voting for and each member voting against such amendment, motion, order, or proposition, and the names of those members present but not voting.

(c) **AVAILABILITY OF ARCHIVED RECORDS** – The records of the Committee at the National Archives and Records Administration shall be made available for public use in accordance with Rule VII of the Rules of the House. The Chairman shall notify the ranking minority member of any decision, pursuant to clause 3 or clause 4 of Rule VII of the Rules of the House, to withhold a record otherwise available, and the matter shall be presented to the Committee for a determination on written request of any member of the Committee.

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

## **RULE 9 - TRAVEL**

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

days in advance of the proposed travel. All travel requests shall be submitted to the Chair in writing and include the following:

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

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

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

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

#### **RULE 10 – FACILITY NAMING**

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

(1) Such individual is deceased and was:

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

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

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

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

(2) Each Member of the Congressional delegation representing the State in which the designated facility is located must indicate in writing such Member's support of the proposal to name such facility after such individual.

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

(4) The above criteria for naming a VA facility may be waived by unanimous consent.



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

OVERSIGHT AGENDA FOR THE 113<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS

The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs conducts its oversight with the help of four Subcommittees: Oversight and Investigations; Economic Opportunity; Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs; and Health. It is expected that oversight of the issues outlined below will be a shared responsibility of both the full Committee and the appropriate Subcommittees.

**Jobs and Economic Opportunity**

1. ***Licensing and Certification Barriers*** – The inability of servicemembers to quickly translate skills learned in the military to post-service employment remains a serious impediment to getting qualified workers into civilian-equivalent jobs. The Committee will continue to oversee the efforts of the Departments of Labor and Defense in working with States and credentialing bodies to break down these barriers.
2. ***Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS)*** – In evaluating VETS' programs, the Committee will focus on interagency cooperation between VETS and the Department of Veterans Affairs' Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VRE) program to assess the effectiveness of combined efforts to place disabled veterans into jobs. We will also take a detailed look at the performance of the State Grant Program with an emphasis on promoting more consistent results. The Committee will also look into the overall effectiveness and timeliness of the information provided by employment assistance programs to veterans.

The Committee will oversee the redesign of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) for those leaving military service. Specifically, we intend to conduct a continuing review of the content of TAP provided under the mandatory attendance provisions of the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011. The Committee will continue to conduct on-site visits to observe TAP classes and to gauge revision and deployment of the TAP curriculum.

3. ***Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment*** – VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VRE) program provides veterans with service-connected disabilities the ability to obtain and maintain suitable employment, and enables certain other disabled veterans to achieve independence in daily living. The Committee will examine VRE's recent efforts to implement its 5-track program throughout the 57 regional offices. We will also focus on VRE's referral of rehabilitated veterans to the state employment services for job placement.
4. ***Employment of National Guard and Reserve Members*** – The Committee will review the efforts of the Department of Labor and VA in facilitating employment opportunities to veterans, with a focus on recently separated service members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, including demobilizing Reserve and National Guard personnel.

5. ***Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA)*** –The Committee will continue to provide oversight of SCRA compliance, with emphasis upon violations by financial institutions overcharging on mortgages, improperly foreclosing, and depriving military families of the protections afforded under SCRA.
6. ***GI Bill*** – The Committee will continue monitoring VA’s efforts to implement the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance with an emphasis on simplifying administration of the benefit. We will also examine ways to improve the delivery of all veterans’ and survivors’ education benefits. The Committee will also explore efforts to track long-term outcomes as well as compile data regarding the transferability of benefits.
7. ***Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP)***- Under the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011, VRAP offers up to 12 months of training for in-demand occupations to 99,000 unemployed veterans between 35 and 60 years old. The Committee will conduct continuing oversight of the roles of the state employment agencies, the Department of Labor, and VA in the application, approval and enrollment, and training of participants. Most importantly, we will monitor whether veterans who have been trained through VRAP actually receive employment in the high-demand jobs for which they’ve been trained.
8. ***Reserve Component Transition Assistance and the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA)*** – USERRA ensures that Guard and Reserve members are able to return to their civilian jobs following deployment. The Committee will assess the effectiveness of USERRA with special emphasis on employers’ willingness to hire National Guard and Reserve members and employment-related issues related to returning to the workforce following activation, as well as issues related enforcement.
9. ***State Approving Agencies (SAA)*** – SAAs approve educational programs to ensure that veterans’ GI Bill resources are used only for legitimate purposes. The Committee will examine the SAAs performance in ensuring compliance with VA policies and procedures, as well as educating school personnel, preventing fraud, and discovering questionable recruiting practices. We will examine how SAAs can become more accountable for the funding they receive from VA.
10. ***Small Business Contracting Goals for Veteran and Service-Connected Disabled Business Owners*** – Overall, the Federal government continues to fall short in meeting the three percent procurement goal for service disabled veteran-owned small businesses (SDVOSB). In 2006, Congress passed Public Law 109-461 which provided SDVOSB and veteran-owned small businesses (VOSB) several advantages in contracting with VA as well as additional tools for VA to contract with SDVOSB and VOSB. The Committee will continue its oversight of VA’s progress implementing the small business provisions of P.L. 109-461.
11. ***VA Loan Guaranty Program*** – The Committee will review veterans’ loan programs to determine whether existing laws, regulations and VA initiatives are sufficient to reduce foreclosures on veteran-owned homes. The Committee will include the views of the mortgage industry and other real estate experts to see if improvements can be made to the existing system including additional protections for mortgagors. We will also review VA operations in the secondary market, to include VA’s Vendee Loan program.

12. ***Paralympics*** – To foster the use of sports as part of rehabilitation, Public Law 110-389 authorized VA to provide a grant to the US Paralympic program to promote development of adaptive sports programs for disabled veterans from the grassroots to elite, competitive levels. The Committee will review VA's Paralympics grant program with an emphasis on the results of grassroots adaptive sports programs.
13. ***Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs*** -- The Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) is an enforcement agency within the Department of Labor. In addition to other equal employment laws, OFCCP enforces the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974 (VEVRAA). The law requires that employers with Federal contracts of \$100,000 or more provide equal opportunity and affirmative action for certain veterans. The Federal government awards prime contractors worth approximately \$200 billion per year. The Committee will examine OFCCP's recent investigatory and enforcement actions related to VEVRAA, staffing matters, and the general complaint process.

### **Health Care**

1. ***Veterans Choice and Access to Fee Care*** - The Committee will examine the availability and means through which the Veterans Health Administration provides care to eligible veterans whose access to traditional medical services is limited by geography, disability, or other challenges. Specifically, the Committee is concerned about the implementation of two new national initiatives– the Patient Centered Community Care (PCCC) and Non-VA Care Coordination (NVCC) programs – both of which would make significant changes to VA's fee care program. Serious issues have been raised about the validity and accuracy of the business case and cost-benefit analysis VA used to develop PCCC and NVCC and whether their implementation will perpetuate the current broken fee care system. The Committee will also conduct oversight of the provision of dialysis services in regard to a May 2012 Government Accountability Office report that found substantial weaknesses in the execution of the planning and early implementation phases of the ongoing VA Dialysis Pilot Program.
2. ***Mental Health Care Quality, Access, and Staffing*** - The Committee will conduct rigorous oversight of the provision of mental health care to veteran patients. Serious questions have been raised about VA's ability to provide timely, effective, and accessible mental health care and benefits to veterans especially those struggling with Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS). An April 2012 VA Inspector General (IG) report exposed serious deficiencies with the accuracy and reliability of VA to determine whether or not VA's mental health care access goals are being met and are appropriate measures of quality care. Among the issues we will explore are: VA's efforts to establish usable data to assess patient demand, patient waiting times, appropriate staffing levels, and clinic capacity; VA's progress in hiring additional mental health staff; the usability and effectiveness of mental health provider performance and productivity measures; partnerships and collaborations with community providers to address service gaps; and, systematic issues impeding patient wellness.

3. ***Beneficiary Travel*** – The Committee will evaluate the administration of VA’s beneficiary travel program to include overall program accountability, the management of funds, and the manner of payments to eligible veterans. We will also oversee the implementation of section 104 of Public Law 112-154, which directs VA to conduct a three-year pilot program to assess the feasibility and advisability of extending beneficiary travel for veterans obtaining care at Vet Centers.
4. ***Caring for Veterans with Amputations*** – The Committee will continue to closely monitor and assess the provision of care to veterans with amputations. VA faces documented challenges in meeting the needs of younger and more active veterans with amputations with the latest technology and providing a strong system-wide prosthetic limb program that is consistent and coordinated. In the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Committee held several hearings that exposed troubling concerns among veterans with amputations and community-based clinicians about the impact new VA policies on the approval of advanced technologies and the veteran’s choice to utilize a community-based provider. Among the issues we will assess is the implementation and impact of prosthetic procurement reforms. Serious concerns have been raised by veterans with amputations and other stakeholders that VA’s planned prosthetic procurement reforms will take prosthetic purchasing authority away from prosthetic specialists and transfer it to contracting officers, which would lead to substantial delays in care and clinical judgments regarding veterans needs being overridden by individuals with little to no experience in prosthetic care.
5. ***Guide and Service Dogs*** – The Committee will closely monitor the implementation of section 109 of Public Law 112-154, which prohibits VA from denying the use of service dogs in, or on, any VA facility or property or any facility or property that receives VA funding. Contrary to the intent of Congress, concerns have been raised that this provision could prevent veterans with owner-trained or otherwise “unaccredited” service dogs from accessing VA property. The Committee will also assess the implementation of regulations that provide veterans with visual, hearing, or mobility impairments with benefits to support the use of a service dog as part of the management of such impairments. In particular, we will closely monitor a recently suspended study to assess the benefits of providing service dogs to veterans with PTSD.
6. ***Sexual Assault Prevention and Safety Measures*** – The Committee will closely monitor the implementation of section 106 of Public Law 112-154, which directs VA to develop and implement a comprehensive policy on reporting, tracking, and prevention of sexual assault and other safety incidents at VA medical facilities. In June 2011, the Government Accountability Office issued a report which found 284 allegations of sexual assault in VA facilities between 2007 and 2010 resulting from significant deficiencies in risk assessment, reporting, tracking and oversight by VA leadership. The Committee will ensure that corrective actions are in place to effectively and efficiently respond to any and all unsafe incidents and ensure the safety of VA patients and employees. (Continuation of efforts from the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress.)
7. ***Strategic and Policy Implications of the Affordable Care Act*** – The Committee will examine the impact of Public Law 111-148, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), on the VA healthcare system. VA healthcare has been deemed to meet “minimum essential coverage” requirements under the law. Nevertheless, the enactment of the ACA carries significant strategic and policy implications for VA, including potential impacts regarding VA enrollment and

utilization, information technology and data collection requirements, and workforce recruitment and retention efforts.

8. ***Women Veterans*** – The Committee will evaluate VA’s progress in increasing access and overcoming barriers associated with health care quality and satisfaction for women veterans, the fastest growing segment of the veteran population. Among the many issues the Committee will focus on are the implementation of provisions in Public Law 111-163 aimed to assist women veterans, including readjustment and child care pilot programs and the activities and recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Women Veterans.
9. ***Medical Recruitment, Retention and Staffing*** – VA faces a large nursing shortage in the next several years. The Committee will review efforts being made by the VA to recruit, hire and train medical staff. Of particular interest will be the recent contract to reintegrate and retain veterans at all levels in the VA.
10. ***Support for Families and Caregivers*** - The Committee will continue to monitor the implementation of the caregiver assistance programs established in Public Law 111-163, the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act. Among the issues are the provision of stipend payments, mental health care services, respite care, and training.
11. ***Management of Major Medical Facility Projects*** -. The Committee will continue its aggressive oversight of VA leadership failures with regard to VA’s capital asset planning, approval, and budgeting process and the execution of major medical facility construction projects. We will also examine the status of ongoing projects, to include Orlando, Florida; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Denver, Colorado; and assess issues with the management and oversight of facility design, construction, and activation which have led to significant cost increases and scheduling delays.
12. ***Recovering Servicemembers and Veterans*** – The Committee will continue to aggressively look at the VA and DOD systematic and persistent leadership, management, and oversight problems affecting the case management and care coordination of wounded warriors.
13. ***Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) Structure*** – The Committee will examine the current VISN structure and ways to realign the VISNs to better manage performance, promote innovation, and establish uniformity of health care services and practices throughout the system. The VISN system has remained in place for fifteen years, with the only structural change taking place in 2002 when VISN 13 and 14 were integrated and renamed VISN 23. With the rapid application of new information technology that has revolutionized the way we live, interact, and conduct business, the Committee will focus on opportunities to restructure the VISNs toward the goal of more patient-centered care.
14. ***Medical and Prosthetic Research Program*** - The Committee will examine the value of VA research with respect to injuries and illnesses related to military service and the acceleration of discoveries and applications, especially for neurotrauma, sensory loss, amputation, polytrauma, and prosthetic needs. Among the issues we will also focus on are: the adequacy of research space and equipment and the development of a clearinghouse designed to promote VA and DOD researchers awareness collaboration and joint publication of research. – add in infrastructure

15. ***Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT)*** - The Committee will provide aggressive oversight of the impact and effectiveness of a new initiative VA is implementing referred to as PACT which is intended to increase access, coordination, communication, and continuity of care by allowing patients to have a dedicated primary care team and a more active role in their health care.
16. ***Pain Management*** - The Committee will examine VHA's pain management strategy. Managing pain is an increasingly significant issue, especially for recently returning combat veterans presenting with a wide range of physical and mental health problems, including musculoskeletal ailments and post traumatic stress. The Committee will focus on: pain awareness, education, intervention; utilization of best practices for the continuum of acute and chronic pain; and the challenge of prescription drug diversion and abuse.
17. ***VA Partnerships With Faith-based and Community Organizations*** - The Committee will continue to examine the role of community providers and faith-based organizations in helping servicemembers transition to civilian life and the need to foster better communication, education, and collaboration between VA and these critical community resources. Specifically, the Committee will focus on VA's relationship with community organizations and actions necessary to establish meaningful and effective partnerships to better support veterans in their home communities. We will also closely monitor the implementation of Section 3 of the Executive Order on Improving Access to Mental Health Services for Veterans, Servicemembers, and Military Families, which directs VA and the Department of Health and Human Services to establish pilot projects to test the effectiveness of community partnerships in helping to meet the mental health needs of veterans.
18. ***Vet Centers*** - The Committee will examine the services provided to servicemembers, veterans, and their families through Vet Centers and evaluate the role of such centers within the larger VA health care system. The Committee will also address the implementation of Section 304 of Public Law 111-163, the Caregiver and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010, which requires VA to establish a program to provide mental health services to immediate family members of returning veterans particularly those who served in the National Guard and Reserve, and section 401, which made active-duty servicemembers eligible to receive readjustment counseling at VA Vet Centers.
19. ***Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Electronic Health Records and Interoperability*** - The Committee has and will continue to devote substantial attention to health information sharing between DOD and VA, understanding the need for this sharing to support the transition from active duty to veterans status. However, VA and DOD face significant challenges in achieving long-term data sharing capability. While the two Departments have developed a strategy at the higher levels, both Departments lack objective, quantifiable, and measurable goals to assess their success in achieving full electronic health record interoperability and VA and DOD lack mechanisms for identifying and implementing efficient and effective information technology solutions to jointly address both Departments' common health care system needs.

20. ***Homeless Veterans Programs*** - The Committee will continue to provide meaningful oversight of VA's plan to 'endless homelessness among the veteran population by 2015 and assure that homeless veterans gain access to the supportive services and meaningful employment they need to reintegrate into stable community environments. In particular, the Committee will work to ensure that VA's efforts regarding homeless veterans are sustainable and focused on the elimination of the factors underlying homelessness, including the aggressive diagnosis and treatment of mental health issues and substance use disorder. The Committee will also assess the use, effectiveness, and any duplication of the specialized programs to assist homeless veterans and examine ways to strengthen VA's ability to prevent at-risk veterans from becoming homeless.
21. ***Camp Lejeune Veterans and Family Members*** - The Committee will monitor the implementation of section 102 of Public Law 112-154, which provides hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care through the VA to certain veterans and their eligible family members who were stationed at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, from January 1, 1957 to December 31, 1987, during which time the well water was contaminated. These veterans are eligible to receive medical care for the following fifteen illnesses or conditions: esophageal cancer; lung cancer; breast cancer; bladder cancer; kidney cancer; leukemia; multiple myeloma; myelodysplastic syndromes; renal toxicity; hepatic steatosis; female infertility; miscarriage; scleroderma; neurobehavioral effects; and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, although the law acknowledges that there is insufficient medical evidence to conclude that any particular illnesses are attributable to military service during that period. The VA will be the final payer to other third-party health insurance plans for eligible family members.
22. ***Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)*** - The subcommittee will continue to investigate the role of post traumatic stress and/or brain injury with veteran suicides, including overmedication (chronic pain management) and other treatment plans. In the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress, O&I identified more than 2000 studies and projects, in both DoD and VA, related to PTS and TBI. Scores of these programs were duplicative.
23. ***Gulf War Illness*** - Early in CY 2013, the Institute of Medicine will publish its latest studies on the relationship between Gulf War service (1990-1991), environmental and chemical exposure, and a host of illnesses that plague veterans from that war. Although service connection has been established for some health issues, VA is not properly utilizing the Gulf War Registry, nor is it connecting veteran reported illnesses to Gulf War service. This lack of attention to detail prevents veterans from receiving medical care for service related issues including sleep disturbances, heart problems, and memory failure.
24. ***Veterans Courts*** - Many states have given veterans with legal troubles the opportunity to have their cases heard and resolved through special courts which liaise with community resources and VA to address the root causes of veterans' legal problems, e.g., substance abuse, PTSD, etc. In return for seeking and sustaining treatment for these issues, veterans are given the ability to keep their record clean and resolve their underlying issues. The Committee will assess VA's role in cooperating with these courts and monitor effectiveness.

25. ***Telehealth and Telemedicine*** – The Committee will assess the VA’s ongoing efforts as to provide greater access to telehealth and telemedicine as part of its overall outreach to rural veterans as well as looking into the effectiveness of these programs in providing greater access and quality health care.

### **Accountability and Transparency**

1. ***VA Budget Transparency*** – The Committee will continue to oversee the sufficiency and transparency of VA’s budget and budgeting process. We will ensure that appropriated dollars are used for their intended purpose and not diverted to other uses without Congressional awareness and assent. This oversight will include every appropriation account and all programs under those accounts. The Committee also plans to explore VA’s planning, programming, budgeting and execution efforts as well as fiscal management and control issues.
2. ***VA’s Acquisition Process*** -- VA continues to spend billions annually for the procurement pharmaceuticals, medical and surgical supplies, prosthetic devices, information technology, construction, and services. VA still faces major challenges implementing a more efficient, effective, and coordinated acquisition program. The Committee will review VA’s procurement practices, and discuss possible legislative remedies. In VA construction, the Committee will address the prevalent practice of contractors increasing their profits by submitting change orders through proposed legislation that will stipulate that if the actual contract price (e.g. construction on major medical facility) exceeds x% of authorized amount, contractor must cover difference.
3. ***Competitive Sourcing and Alternative Management Systems*** – The VA is implementing the President’s Management Agenda and Office of Management and Budget Directives through competitive sourcing and alternative management systems. The Committee is interested in the factual basis for the conduct of this program and the organizational benefits yielded.
4. ***Energy Sustainability and Efficiencies*** – The Committee will continue to conduct oversight on VA’s progress with sustainability and energy efficiencies at the various VA locations to include VA health care facilities and National Cemeteries. The examination will include a focused look at how the VA has spent funding authorized to enhance sustainability and efficiency programs and whether the funding is being well spent and the savings touted by VA are quantifiable.
5. ***Fund Programs*** – The Committee will utilize a forensic accountant to conduct a detailed review of VA’s medical care collection fund (including demonstrations, consolidations and outsourcing initiatives), the Supply Fund, the ADVANCE Fund, the VA plus One Fund, the Franchise Fund and others as identified. Of concern is how VA moves money to and from these funds, how they are categorized (whether obligated or unobligated) and whether or not this money is properly revealed to Congress.
6. ***Consolidated Patient Accounting System (CPAC)*** – The Committee will continue to conduct oversight on VA’s consolidation of VHA’s business office functions into seven regional centers. The examination will focus on the transformation of VHA billing and collections activities, and to determine how closely VHA purports to be aligned with industry best practices.



7. ***Evaluating Management Efficiencies*** -- The VA plans to achieve specified savings each fiscal year by implementing various procedures to achieve cost avoidance. The Committee will examine the relationship of projected savings with demonstrated savings and assess the impact on delivery of quality services.
8. ***Office of Resolution Management for EEO Complaints*** -- Public Law 105-114, the Veterans Benefits Act of 1997, included a requirement that the Department of Veterans Affairs take actions to improve its equal employment opportunity program and created the Office of Resolution Management. The Committee will review the effectiveness of the Office of Resolution Management, but also notes the large increase in both EEO complaints and the financial burden for VA.
9. ***National Archives and Records Administration*** -- The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) maintain the military personnel records of discharged members of the Armed Forces. The Committee will examine the security of veteran records maintained at NARA to ascertain the protection of personal identifying information of our nation's veterans, as well as the transmittal of these records to VA in order to assist veterans in the claims process, and to help reduce the claims backlog.
10. ***VA Information Technology Programs*** -- The Committee will continue its oversight of VA's IT programs. We will pay specific attention to the progress of VA's integrated enterprise architecture plan and efforts to improve its internal and external cyber security, as well as review the effectiveness of the VA's Project Management Accountability System (PMAS) and the new T-4 information technology contracting process, which is a five-year Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) Multiple Award Task Order contract with a program ceiling of \$12 billion.
11. ***Proprietary and Sensitive Information*** -- Aside from storing personally identifiable information for millions of veterans, VA's IT architecture also stores proprietary information related to VA research on science, health, and IT. VA has made efforts at improving IT security pertaining to PII, but efforts aimed at storing proprietary information have not received the same amount of scrutiny. Additionally, the Committee has tracked VA's underperforming supply chain risk management efforts related to the electronic health record, and this lack of progress has raised concerns in other areas of IT storage. The Committee will continue its oversight work in this area.
12. ***VA's Fourth Mission, Emergency Management Capabilities*** -- The events of September 11, 2001 as well as the Hurricanes in the Gulf Coast region in 2005 raised national awareness of the role of the Federal government in times of emergency or disaster. The Committee will continue its oversight of VA's role and responsibilities as part of the National Response Framework.
13. ***VA Senior Executive Service Bonuses*** -- The Committee will continue its oversight of VA's bonus practices for its Senior Executive Service employees, as well as review performance measures including Office of Personnel Management (OPM) mandates..

14. ***Credentialing and Screening of VA Healthcare Employees*** -- The Committee will examine VA's implementation of Government Accountability Office (GAO) recommendations that indicated serious flaws in screening the professional credentials of VA healthcare practitioners.
15. ***VA/DOD Benefits Delivery at Discharge Program*** -- The Committee will evaluate DOD's utilization of a single examination that meets both military services' separation requirements and VA's disability compensation criteria. The Committee will also review VA's efforts to co-locate Veterans Benefits Administration and Veterans Health Administration personnel involved in compensation and pension claims processing to provide more efficient one-stop claims processing centers. Further, we will examine the effectiveness of the implementation of the integrated DoD/VA Disability Evaluation System (iDES).
16. ***Electronic Health Records*** -- VA and DOD, through their joint Health Executive Council, have developed a plan to create an interoperable electronic medical record first by 2005, and more recently by 2017. The Committee will review the progress that has been made in interoperability and the timely bi-directional exchange of medical information.
17. ***Human Subjects Protection Program*** -- The Committee will continue to review programs that involve human subjects, including any effort that must be approved by an Independent Review Board, to ensure veterans are properly protected as necessary.
18. ***Controlled Substances Security*** -- The IG's Combined Assessment Program Reviews have repeatedly found material weaknesses in VA medical center security of controlled substances. Poor security or lack of security seriously increases the potential for waste, fraud, abuse, and drug diversion. The Committee will examine how VA is addressing this issue.
19. ***Laboratory and Clinical Select Agent Security*** -- VA Level 3 Laboratories and all VA Medical Centers are host to various chemical, biological and radiological agents. The Subcommittee will review the security of these agents. This is an ongoing Committee interest.
20. ***Workers' Compensation Program*** -- The IG previously reported on VA's poor case management of workers' compensation claims. VA is at risk for program abuse, fraud, and unnecessary costs because it has not fully implemented IG recommendations issued in 1999. The Committee will examine what should be done to improve the Workers Compensation Program.
21. ***Enhanced Land Leases and Divestment of Federal Property*** -- The Committee will review the adequacy of internal controls related to leasing or selling of VA assets and assess the tangible benefit to taxpayers, as well as exploring how VA efforts fit into its overall capital asset strategic plan.
22. ***Historic Properties*** -- The Committee will review the use and condition of historic properties owned and operated by VA, and whether the Department can sustain the costs and maintenance involved with these properties in the future.

23. **Whistleblower** – Whistleblowers continue to be a vital source of accurate and timely information. Protecting an employee’s legal right to communicate with Congress is essential to oversight and this subcommittee looks to strengthen whistleblower protections. The Committee will continue to monitor VA’s adherence to whistleblower protections.
24. **Profitability Spectrum** – The Committee will continue to review profits acquired by VA for licensing department rooftop space for cell towers (more than \$3 million in FY12), for patents (at least \$391,894 in FY12), and land leases. We will also review how the money is being accounted for and distributed.
25. **Financial Management Systems** – In 2004 VA scrapped its CoreFLS program after spending \$249 million. VA’s FLITE program, a replacement for the failed CoreFLS program, was stopped in 2010 after more than \$90.8 million was spent. In February 2011 SAM was also cancelled after more than \$20 million. VA is in dire need of an updated financial management system. The Committee will continue to oversee and investigate any efforts to modernize VA’s financial management system.
26. **VA Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA)** - Frequently inconsistent, incomplete, and untimely responses to requests for information from the Committee, along with a lack of established procedures within OCLA, warrant further review so the Committee can get the information necessary to perform its oversight.
27. **Conferences & Training** – In 2011, VA spent over \$100 million on conferences. Inspector General reports suggest widespread waste in conference spending. The Committee will continue to investigate VA’s exorbitant conferences and training costs

#### **Benefits and Memorial Affairs**

1. **Rating Schedule Hearing** -- The current rating schedule was created after WWII. VA has recently undertaken an effort to comprehensively revise all 15 body systems in the VASRD. In September 2012, GAO issued a report finding that VA was over 12 months behind schedule on this update and lacked a complete plan for the updates. Therefore, the Committee will continue its oversight to keep VA on track in reforming the rating schedule and determine whether a focused study or new legislation (as suggested by GAO) should be introduced.
2. **Temporary/Total Ratings** -- A majority of the temporary total ratings handed down by VA Regional Offices have been found to be in error. Although VA initially attributed these errors to a computer glitch, VA OIG regional office audits continue to reveal a high error rate as to these claims. The Committee will oversee how best to address this issue in the interest of saving VA time and money.
3. **National Cemeteries Hearing** -- The Committee will examine the immediate and long-term needs of the VA National Cemetery Administration (NCA) and the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) to provide burial or commemoration to America’s fallen heroes. Specifically, the Committee will follow up on the NCA audit, as well as the VA OIG’s audit of

the NCA audit, to determine if all burial errors have been corrected and if NCA has executed proper management controls to prevent such errors in the future.

4. ***VA's Transformation Plan*** -- A Committee hearing was held last June on VA's Transformation Plan. At the hearing, VA did not present a cohesive plan for transforming the agency, but rather listed a conglomerate of loosely tied initiatives. The Committee has made numerous requests for a copy of the Transformation Plan with no response from VA. Continued oversight of this effort is essential.
5. ***Call Center and eBenefits Issues*** -- The various Call Centers have been a constant area of consternation for veterans who complain about long wait times, no call backs and incorrect information about their claims status from the representatives. Although VA tries to re-direct many of these veterans to eBenefits (an electronic means for veterans to obtain information on their claims), recent briefings from VA reveal that eBenefits is not updated in a timely manner and is not providing veterans with the most up to date casetracking information. Continued oversight of this effort is necessary.
6. ***The Current Appeals Process*** -- The Committee will continue to monitor the compensation and pension claims appeal process at the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA), the Appeals Management Center (AMC) and the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC). The Committee plans to focus on exploring avenues to simplify the current appeal process, increase accountability and reduce avoidable remands.
7. ***Blue Water Navy*** -- Vietnam veterans who served in the waters offshore Vietnam are ineligible for Agent Orange compensation on a presumptive basis unless VA has registered the ships on which they served as eligible for the presumption of exposure to Agent Orange. Although organizations advocating for these "Blue Water Navy" veterans have been working with VA to add many ships to its registry, many advocates are still pushing for full recognition for this group. The Committee will continue to oversee this issue.
8. ***Filipino Veterans*** -- Recently, the Obama administration indicated that it will undertake a review of denied Filipino veterans' claims. The Committee will examine this effort as it is unclear exactly what standard will be used to review denied claims.
9. ***VBA Staffing and productivity*** -- Since 2007, VA has consistently requested additional staffing to keep up with the claims backlog, requiring significantly more funding. Although VA has added approximately 3,000 new claims processors in the last five years, the backlog has continued to increase, rather than decrease. Accordingly, the Committee will examine the impact of additional staffing on productivity at VA's regional offices, as well as other alternatives to addressing the backlog besides additional staffing.
10. ***VA Insurance Programs*** -- The potential for in-service medical conditions may make it difficult or even impossible for servicemembers to obtain private insurance; therefore VA administers a variety of life insurance programs for servicemembers and veterans. The Committee will continue to oversee the effectiveness of these programs, to include the benefits of automatic

enrollment, the addition of new conditions covered by traumatic injury protection; and additional coverage options for family members.

11. ***VA Pension Program*** -- In the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress, it was revealed that VA's pension program was being abused in some instances because veterans were hiding assets in order to qualify for the program. In addition, a whistleblower report showed evidence of problems processing payments, including duplicate payments for some veterans. Therefore, the Committee will continue to oversee all aspects of the pension program to ensure that pension claims are processed efficiently and that veterans are receiving the proper payment amount.
12. ***Claims Processing Consistency*** -- Recent reports have revealed that timeliness and accuracy statistics for VA claims vary widely with regional offices in major metropolitan areas (such as Oakland, Los Angeles, and New York City) having far lower performance metrics than those in less populated areas (such as Lincoln, NE; Sioux Falls, SD; and Togus, ME). Although VA uses a brokering system to transfer claims from some lower performing regional offices to higher performing offices, rigorous oversight of this aspect of the claims process will ensure that similarly situated veterans are treated equally regardless of their physical location.
13. ***Coordination Between VBA and VHA*** -- Although both VBA and VHA are within VA, veterans often complain that there is little to no communication or meaningful collaboration between the two departments, often causing complications. Oversight of the communication and collaboration process between VBA and VHA will ensure a more effective "big picture" method for treating disabled veterans.

## ACTIVITIES OF THE FULL COMMITTEE

### *First Session*

#### LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

**Legislative Hearing on H.R. 813; H.R. 806; and a discussion draft bill "To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a Future-Years Veterans Program and a quadrennial veterans review, to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs a Chief Strategy Officer, and for other purposes."**

On July 17, 2013 the Full Committee held a legislative hearing on H.R. 813, Putting Veterans Funding First Act of 2013; H.R. 806, To amend title 38, United States Code, to make permanent the requirement for annual reports on Comptroller General reviews of the accuracy of Department of Veterans Affairs medical budget submissions, and for other purposes; and a discussion draft bill "To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a Future-Years Veterans Program and a quadrennial veterans review, to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs a Chief Strategy Officer, and for other purposes."

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Robert D. Snyder, Acting Assistant Secretary for the Office of Policy and Planning U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs accompanied by: Ms. Helen Tierney, Executive in Charge for the Office of Management and Chief Financial Officer U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Duane C. Flemming, Director, Policy Analysis and Forecasting Office of the Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health Veterans Health Administration U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Carl Blake, National Legislative Director Paralyzed Veterans of America accompanied by: Mr. Adrian Atizado, Assistant National Legislative Director Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Ray Kelley, Director, National Legislative Service Veterans of Foreign Wars; Ms. Diane M. Zumatto, National Legislative Director, AMVETS; and Mr. Louis J. Celli, Jr., Director, National Legislative Division The American Legion. See Legislative Hearing on H.R. 813; H.R. 806; and a discussion draft bill "To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a Future-Years Veterans Program and a quadrennial veterans review, to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs a Chief Strategy Officer, and for other purposes, Serial No. 113-30.

#### **Full Committee Markup of H.R. 671, H.R. 1405, H.R. 570, H.R. 1412, H.R. 357, H.R. 602**

On May 8, 2013, the Full Committee met and marked up H.R. 671, the Ruth Moore Act of 2013; H.R. 1405, To amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to include an appeals form in any notice of decision issued for the denial of a benefit sought; H.R. 570, the American Heroes COLA Act; H.R. 1412, Improving Job Opportunities for Veterans Act of 2013; H.R. 357, GI Bill Tuition Fairness Act of 2013; H.R. 602, the Veterans 2nd Amendment Protection Act.

On May 8, 2013, an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (A.N.S) to H.R. 671, as amended, was offered by Ranking Member Michaud of Maine and adopted by the Full

Committee by voice vote. H.R. 671, as amended passed the Full Committee and was favorably reported to the Full House of Representatives by voice vote.

On May 8, 2013, an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (A.N.S) to H.R. 1405, as amended, was offered by Rep. Titus of Nevada and adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. H.R. 1405, as amended passed the Full Committee and was favorably reported to the Full House by voice vote.

On May 8, 2013, H.R. 570, introduced by Rep. Runyan of New Jersey, passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably reported to the Full House by voice vote.

On May 8, 2013, an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (A.N.S) to H.R. 1412 was offered by Rep. Coffman of Colorado and adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. H.R. 1412, as amended passed the Full Committee and was favorably reported to the Full House by voice vote.

On May 8, 2013, an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (A.N.S) to H.R. 357, as amended was offered by Chairman Miller of Florida and adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. H.R. 357, as amended passed the Full Committee and was favorably reported to the Full House by voice vote.

On May 8, 2013, H.R. 602, introduced by Chairman Miller of Florida passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was favorably reported to the Full House by voice vote.

On May 17, 2013, H.R. 671, as amended was reported by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, H. Rept. 113-63.

On May 17, 2013, H.R. 570 was reported by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H. Rept. 113-62.

On May 17, 2013, H.R. 1412, as amended was reported by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H. Rept. 113-64.

On May 21, 2013, H.R. 570 passed the House on a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended and agreed to by voice vote.

On May 21, 2013, H.R. 1412, as amended, passed the House on a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended and was agreed to by the Yeas and Nays: (2/3 required): 416 - 0 (Roll no. 164).

On May 22, 2013, H.R. 570, was referred to the Senate Veterans' Affairs committee.

On June 3, 2013, H.R. 357, as amended was reported by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H. Rept. 113-94 and placed on the Union Calendar, Calendar No. 66.

On June 4, 2013, H.R. 671, as amended passed the House on a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended was agreed to by voice vote.

On June 6, 2013, H.R. 671, as amended was referred to the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee.

On July 19, 2013, H.R. 602 was reported by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H. Rept. 113-159 and placed on the Union Calendar, Calendar No. 114.

On June 25, 2013, H.R. 1405, as amended was reported by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, H. Rept. 113-130.

On September 23, 2013, H.R. 1412, as amended, passed the Senate with an amendment to the title by Unanimous Consent.

On September 27, 2013, H.R. 1412 was agreed to, with Senate Amendments, by the Yeas and Nays: (2/3 required): 402 - 0 (Roll no. 491).

On September 30, 2013, H.R. 1412, as amended was signed by the President and became Public Law No: 113-37.

On October 28, 2013, H.R. 1405, as amended passed the House on a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended and agreed to by voice vote.

**Full Committee Markup of H.R. Markup of H.R. 813; H.R. 2072; H.R. 2481, H.R. 1804, as amended; H.R. 2189, as amended; H.R. 1443, as amended; H.R. 2011**

On August 1, 2013, the Full Committee met and marked up H.R. 813, the Putting Veterans Funding First Act of 2013; H.R. 1804, as amended the Foreign Travel Accountability Act; H.R. 2073, the Demanding Accountability for Veterans Act of 2013; H.R. 2189, as amended to establish a commission or task force to evaluate the backlog of disability claims of the Department of Veterans Affairs; H.R. 2481 The Veterans G.I. Bill Enrollment Clarification Act of 2013; H.R. 1443, as amended Tinnitus Research and Treatment Act of 2013; and H.R. 2011, Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education Improvement Act of 2013.

On August 1, 2013, an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (A.N.S.) to H.R. 813 was offered by Rep. Bilirakis of Florida and adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. H.R. 813, as amended passed the Full Committee and was favorably reported to the Full House of Representatives by voice vote.

On August 1, 2013, an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (A.N.S.) to H.R. 1804, as amended was Offered by Rep. Huelskamp and adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. H.R. 1804, as amended passed the Full Committee and was favorably reported to the Full House of Representatives by voice vote.

On August 1, 2013, an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (A.N.S.) to H.R. 2072 was offered by Rep. Benishek of Michigan and was adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. H.R. 2072, as amended passed the Full Committee and was favorably reported to the Full House of Representatives by voice vote.

On August 1, 2013, an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (A.N.S.) to H.R. 2189, as amended was offered by Rep. Runyan of New Jersey and adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. H.R. 2189, as amended passed the Full Committee and was favorably reported to the Full House of Representatives by voice vote.

On August 1, 2013, an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (A.N.S.) to H.R. 2481 was offered by Rep. Flores of Texas and was adopted by the Full Committee by voice vote. H.R. 2481, as amended passed the Full Committee and was favorably reported to the Full House of Representatives by voice vote.

On August 1, 2013, H.R. 1443, as amended passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was reported favorably to the Full House of Representatives by voice vote.

On August 1, 2013, H.R. 2011, introduced by Rep. John Delaney of Maryland passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was reported favorably to the Full House by voice vote.

On September 11, 2013, H.R. 2481, as amended was reported by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H. Rept. 113-207.

On September 17, 2013, H.R. 813, as amended was reported by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H. Rept. 113-212 and placed on the Union Calendar, Calendar No. 156.

On September 17, 2013, H.R. 2011 was reported by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H. Rept. 113-211.

On September 25, 2013, H.R. 1804, as amended was reported by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H. Rept. 113-227.

On September 27, 2013, H.R. 2189, as amended was Reported by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H. Rept. 113-236.



On October 7, 2013, Supplemental report to H.R. 1804, as amended was filed by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, H. Rept. 113-227, Part II.

On October 16, 2013, H.R. 2072, as amended was reported by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H. Rept. 113-245 and placed on the Union Calendar, Calendar No. 173.

On October 22, 2013, H.R. 1443, as amended was reported by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H. Rept. 113-247 and placed on the Union Calendar, Calendar No. 175.

On October 28, 2013, H.R. 2481, as amended passed the House on a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended and agreed to by voice vote.

On October 28, 2013, H.R. 2189, as amended passed the House on a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended agreed to by the Yeas and Nays: (2/3 required): 404 - 1 (Roll no. 561).

On October 28, 2013, H.R. 2011 passed the House on a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill agreed to by the Yeas and Nays: (2/3 required): 404 - 2 (Roll no. 562).

On October 29, 2013, H.R. 2481, as amended was referred to the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee.

On October 29, 2013, H.R. 2189, as amended was referred to Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee.

On October 29, 2013, H.R. 2011 was referred to the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee.

#### **Full Committee Markup of H.R. 3521**

On November 20, 2013 the Full Committee met and marked up H.R. 3521, "To authorize Department of Veterans Affairs major medical facility leases, and for other purposes." Introduced by Chairman Miller of Florida;

On November 20, 2013 H.R. 3521 passed the Full Committee by voice vote and was reported favorably to the Full House by voice vote.

## OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

### **Business Meeting- Organization of the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress**

On January 22, 2013 the Full Committee met to formally organize the Committee's agenda and priorities for the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress. The Full Committee approved the Rules of the Full Committee, the oversight agenda, ratio of Subcommittees, Subcommittee and Full Committee Membership for Republican and Democratic Members, Chairmanship and Ranking Members of Subcommittees, and the Committee staff of both the Majority and Minority for the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress.

### **Full Committee Hearing—Honoring the Commitment: Overcoming Barriers to Quality Mental Health Care for Veterans**

On February 13, 2013, the Full Committee met to discuss the Department of Veterans Affairs' performance in providing timely and effective mental health care to veterans and to explore methods by which to further improve availability of care.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by M. David Rudd, Ph.D. ABPP, Dean, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences Co-Founder and Scientific Director, National Center for Veteran Studies University of Utah; Linda Spoonster Schwartz, RN, Dr. PH, FAAN, Commissioner of Veterans Affairs State of Connecticut, Joy J. Ilem, Deputy National

Legislative, Director Disabled American Veterans; and Ralph Ibson, National Policy Director, Wounded Warrior Project.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by The Honorable Dr. Robert A. Petzel, M.D., Under Secretary for Health Veterans, Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Sonja Batten, Deputy Chief Consultant for Specialty Mental Health Office of Patient Care Services, Veterans Health Administration U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Dr. Janet Kemp, Director, Suicide Prevention and Community Engagement National Mental Health Program Office of Patient Care Services, Veterans Health Administration U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See *Honoring the Commitment: Overcoming Barriers to Quality Mental Health Care for Veterans*, Serial No. 113-03.

**Full Committee Site Visits – CODEL Miller – San Diego, CA; Honolulu, HI; Guam; and the Philippines**

On February 15-24, 2013, Chairman Miller led a CODEL to San Diego, CA, Honolulu, HI, Guam, and the Philippines to assess the clinical operations, programs, and collaborative activities of the Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense medical facilities. In addition, the delegation reviewed the management and activities of Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Offices (RO), as well as certain cemeteries under the administration of the National Cemetery Administration and the American Battle Monuments Commission. The delegation also included House Veterans' Affairs Committee members: Ranking Member Michael H. Michaud (ME), Vice-Chairman Gus M. Bilirakis (FL), Honorable Timothy J. Walz (MN), House Appropriations Committee member, Honorable Jo Bonner (AL), House Veterans' Affairs Committee Majority Staff Director, Helen Tolar, and Jian Zapata of the Minority Staff.

**Full Committee Hearing—Joint House and Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs to receive Legislative Presentation of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV)**

On February 26, 2013, the Full Committee participated in a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to receive testimony from Disabled American Veterans (DAV) on its 2013 legislative priorities.

On the first and only panel, testimony was received by Mr. Larry A. Polzin, National Commander accompanied by: Mr. Garry J. Augustine, National Service Director; Mr. Joseph A. Violante, National Legislative Director; Mr. Barry A. Jesinoski, Executive Director Washington Headquarters; Mr. Arthur H. Wilson, National Adjutant; Mr. Ron B. Minter, National Director of Voluntary Service; and Ms. Donna M. Adams, National Commander Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary. See *Joint House and Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs to receive Legislative Presentation of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV)*, Serial No.113-05.

**Full Committee Hearing—Electronic Health Record U-Turn: Are VA and DOD Headed in the Wrong Direction?**

On February 27, 2013, the Full Committee held a hearing on the implementation of the integrated Electronic Health Record (iEHR) and the cooperation on this effort between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by The Honorable Roger W. Baker, Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology and Chief Information Officer U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs accompanied by: The Honorable Dr. Robert A. Petzel, M.D., Under Secretary for Health Veterans, Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans

Affairs; The Honorable Jonathan A. Woodson, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs Director, TRICARE Management Activity U.S. Department of Defense accompanied by: The Honorable Elizabeth A. McGrath, Deputy Chief Management Officer U.S. Department of Defense; Ms. Valerie C. Melvin, Director, Information Management and Technology Resources Issues U.S. Government Accountability Office; and Mr. Jacob B. Gadd, Deputy Director for Healthcare, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion. See Electronic Health Record U-Turn: Are VA and DOD Headed in the Wrong Direction? Serial No.113-06.

**Full Committee Meeting—Joint House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs to receive Legislative Presentation of Multiple Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs)**

On February 28, 2013, the Full Committee participated in a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to receive testimony from Multiple Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) on their legislative priorities in 2013.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Tom Tarantino, Deputy Policy Director, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; Bruce McKenty, National Commander, Military Order of the Purple Heart; Sam Huhn, National President, Blinded Veterans Association; H. Gene Overstreet, USMC, Ret., President, Non-commissioned Officer Association; Richard Delaney, National President, The Retired Enlisted Association; Charles Susino, National Commander, American Ex-Prisoner of War; and Dawn Halfaker, President, Board of Directors, Wounded Warrior Project. This hearing was hosted by the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee; and therefore does not have a House Serial No.

**Full Committee Meeting – Joint House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs to receive Legislative Presentation of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)**

On March 5, 2013, the Full Committee participated in a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to receive testimony from the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). The VFW presented their legislative priorities to the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees for fiscal year 2014.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Mr. John E Hamilton, Commander-in-Chief Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. This hearing was hosted by the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee; and therefore does not have a House Serial No.

**Full Committee Hearing- Joint House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs to receive Legislative Presentation of Multiple Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs)**

On March 6, 2013 the Full Committee participated in a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to receive testimony from Multiple Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) on its 2013 legislative priorities.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Cleve Geer, National Commander, AMVETS; CMSGT John R. "Doc" McCauslin USAF (RET), Chief Executive Officer, Air Force Sergeants Association; Mr. Bill Lawson, President, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Mr. Sheldon Ohren, National Commander, Jewish War Veterans; Ms. Vivianne Cisneros Wersel, Au.D, Gold Star Wives; Mr. Mark A. Kilgore, National President, Fleet Reserve Association; Mr. John Rowan, National President, Vietnam Veterans of America; RADM W. Clyde Marsh, USN (RET), President, National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs; and MG Gus Hargett, President, National Guard Association of the United

States. See Joint House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs to receive Legislative Presentation of Multiple Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs), Serial No. 113-07.

**Full Committee Hearing—Focusing on People: A Review of VA's Plans for Employee Training, Accountability, and Workload Management to Improve Disability Claims Processing**

On March 20, 2013, the Full Committee held a hearing focused on improving VA effectiveness through more comprehensive, far-seeing approaches to processing disability claims.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by The Honorable Allison Hickey, Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs accompanied by: Ms. Diana Rubens, Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See Focusing on People: A Review of VA's Plans for Employee Training Accountability, and the Workload Management to Improve Disability Claims Processing, Serial No.113-12.

**Full Committee Hearing—U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2014**

On April 11, 2013, the Full Committee held hearing on the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2014.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by The Honorable Eric. K Shinseki, Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs accompanied by: The Honorable Dr. Robert A. Petzel, M.D., Under Secretary for Health Veterans, Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; The Honorable Allison Hickey, Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; The Honorable Steve L. Muro, Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, National Cemetery Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. W. Todd Grams, Executive in Charge, Office of Management Chief Financial Officer, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Stephen W. Warren, Acting Assistant Secretary, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Jeffrey Hall, Assistant National Legislative director, Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Carl Blake, National Legislative Director Paralyzed Veterans of America; Ms. Diane M. Zumatto, National Legislative Director, AMVETS; Mr. Ray Kelley, Legislative Director, Veterans of Foreign War; and Mr. Louis Celli, Legislative Director, The American Legion. See U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2014, Serial No. 113-15.

**Full Committee Roundtable Discussion with Veterans Services Organizations**

On April 16, 2013, the Majority Members of the Full Committee hosted the first HVAC Veterans Service Organization Roundtable of the 113th Congress. The event brought together representatives from nearly 30 Veterans Service Organizations, HVAC members and congressional leaders for an off-the-record discussion regarding perennial veterans-related challenges such as VA's benefits claims backlog and mental health care access.

Participants included representatives from: The American Legion, AMVETS, Air Force Sergeants Association, Association of the U.S. Army, Association of the U.S. Navy, Blinded Veterans Association, Disabled American Veterans, Fisher House, Fleet Reserve Association, IAVA, Jewish War Veterans of America, NASDVA, National Association of Uniformed

Services, National Guard Association of the United States, National Military Family Association, Non-Commissioned Officers Association, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Remind.org, Reserve Officers Association, Soldier On, Student Veterans of America, The Retired Enlisted Association, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, U.S. Paralympics, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Vets First, Vietnam Veterans of America, and Wounded Warrior Project. Majority Members of the Full Committee, Chairman Paul Ryan of the House Budget Committee, and House Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy were also in attendance.

**Full Committee Hearing—Examining the Implications of the Affordable Care Act on VA Healthcare**

On April 24, 2013, the Full Committee held a hearing regarding the effects of the Affordable Care Act on the VA's ability to provide prompt and adequate healthcare.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by The Honorable Dr. Robert A. Petzel, M.D., Under Secretary for Health Veterans, Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs accompanied by: Ms. Patricia Vandenberg MHA, BSN, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health Policy and Planning, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Lynne Harbin, Deputy Chief Business Officer Member Services, Chief Business Office, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Lisa Zarlenga, Tax Legislative Counsel, U.S. Department of the Treasury accompanied by: Mr. Jason Levitis, Senior Advisor to the Assistant Secretary for Tax Policy, U.S. Department of the Treasury. See Examining the Implications of the Affordable Care Act on VA Healthcare, Serial No.113-17.

**Full Committee Hearing—Expediting Claims or Exploiting Statistics?: An Examination of VA's Special Initiative to Process Rating Claims Pending Over Two Years**

On May 22, 2013, the Full Committee held an oversight hearing on the progress of the VA in completing disability claims that have been in process for over two years.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by The Honorable Allison A. Hickey, Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs accompanied by: Ms. Diana Rubens, Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See Expediting Claims or Exploiting Statistics?: An Examination of VA's Special Initiative to Process Rating Claims Pending Over Two Years Serial No. 113-20.

**Full Committee Hearing—Assessing VA's Capital Investment Options to Provide Veterans' Care**

On June 27, 2013, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing to address the status and potential for a new paradigm for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Major Medical Facility and Lease Program.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Robert A. Sunshine, Deputy Director, and Congressional Budget Office.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by The Honorable Robert A. Petzel M.D., Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs accompanied by: Philip Matovsky, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Administrative Operations, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Jim Sullivan, Director, Office of Asset Enterprise Management, U.S. Department of

Veterans Affairs. See Assessing VA's Capital Investment Options to Provide Veterans' Care, Serial No. 113-26.

**Joint Committee Hearing of the House Committee on Armed Services and the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs—DOD and VA Collaboration to Assist Service Members Returning to Civilian Life**

On July 10, 2013, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs participated in a joint hearing with the House Committee on Armed Services regarding cooperation between the DOD and VA and efforts to more effectively coordinate each department's endeavors to assist veterans' transition to civilian life.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by the Honorable Frank Kendall, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Department of Defense accompanied by: The Honorable Jonathan Woodson, M.D., Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs and Director, TRICARE Management Activity Department of Defense; the Honorable Jessica L. Wright, Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Department of Defense; and the Honorable Stephen W. Warren, Acting Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology Department of Veterans Affairs accompanied by: The Honorable Dr. Robert A. Petzel, M.D., Under Secretary for Health Veterans Health Administration Department of Veterans Affairs. See Joint Committee Hearing of the House Committee on Armed Services and the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs—DOD and VA Collaboration to Assist Service Members Returning to Civilian Life, Serial No. 113-29.

**Field Hearing - "A Matter of Life and Death: Examining Preventable Deaths, Patient-Safety Issues and Bonuses for VA Execs Who Oversaw Them."**

On September 9, 2013 the Full Committee conducted a field hearing at the Alleghany Courthouse in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to examine the Department of Veterans Affairs' approach to stopping preventable patient deaths and lapses in care at VA medical centers around the country. The purpose of this hearing is to examine whether VA has the proper management and accountability structures in place to stop the emerging pattern of preventable veteran deaths and serious patient-safety issues at VA medical centers across the country.

During the first panel testimony was provided by Ms. Brandie Petit Veteran Family Member from Atlanta, GA; Mr. Gerald J. Rakiiecki a veteran and VA Police Officer from Buffalo, NY; Ms. Sydney N.W. Schoellman, a veteran family member from Dallas, TX; Ms. Phyllis Hollenbeck M.D., FAAP, a VA Primary Care Physician; Mr. Robert E. Nicklas a veteran family member from Pittsburgh, PA who was accompanied by Ms. Judy Nicklas; and Ms. Maureen A. Ciarolla a veteran family member from Pittsburgh, PA.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by the Honorable Robert A. Petzel, Under Secretary for Health, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Under Secretary Petzel was accompanied by several Medical Center Directors with the Veterans Health Administration at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See A Matter of Life and Death: Examining Preventable Deaths, Patient Safety Issues and Bonuses for VA Execs Who Oversaw Them, Serial No. 113-32.

**Joint Hearing House and Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs - Legislative Presentation of the American Legion**

On September 10, 2013 the Full Committee participated in a Joint Hearing with the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs to receive testimony from the American Legion on its 2014 legislative priorities.

The first and only panel consisted of the National Commander and representatives from the Veterans Service Organization, the American Legion. This hearing was hosted by the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee; and therefore does not have a House Serial No.

**Full Committee Hearing - Trials in Transparency: An Analysis of the Department of Veterans Affairs' Cooperation with Congress in Meeting its Oversight Responsibilities on Behalf of Veterans**

On September 19, 2013 the Full Committee met in open session to examine the Department of Veterans Affairs' transparency challenges and cooperation with Congress. The purpose of this hearing was to examine how VA's lack of responsiveness to the House Veterans' Affairs Committee's information requests is impeding the committee's oversight responsibilities and how the Department can improve its transparency in the future.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by the Honorable Joan Mooney, Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Legislative Affairs, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See: Trials in Transparency: An Analysis of VA Cooperation with Congress in Meeting its Oversight Responsibilities on Behalf of Veterans Serial No. 113-37.

**Full Committee Hearing - Effect of Government Shutdown on Department of Veterans Affairs Benefits and Services to Veterans**

On October 9, 2013 the Full Committee met in open session to examine how the Department of Veterans Affairs lack of responsiveness to the House Veterans' Affairs Committee information requests is impeding the committee's oversight responsibilities and how the department can improve its transparency in the future.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by the Honorable Eric K. Shinseki, Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Submissions for the Record were provided by several Veterans Service Organizations. See Effect of Government Shutdown on VA Benefits and Services to Veterans, Serial No. 113-38.

**Full Committee - Building the Department of Veterans Affairs' Future: Confronting Persistent Challenges in VA Major Construction and Lease Programs**

On November 20, 2013 the Full Committee met in open session to review the need for corrective actions to improve the administration, management and oversight of the Department of Veterans Affairs lease procurement process.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Ms. Linda Halliday, Assistant Inspector General for Audits and Evaluations, Office of the Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Ms. Halliday who was accompanied by Ms. Maureen Regan, Counselor to the Inspector General, Office of the Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Lloyd Caldwell P.E., Director of Military Programs, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Mr. Glenn D. Haggstrom, Principal Executive Director, Office of Acquisitions, Logistics, and Construction, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs who was accompanied by, Ms. Stella Fiotes, Executive Director, Office of Construction and Facilities Management, U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Multiple Veterans Service Organization provided statements for the record. See Building VA's Future: Confronting Persistent Challenges in VA Major Construction and Lease Programs, Serial No. 113-46.



ACTIVITIES OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON DISABILITY ASSISTANCE AND  
MEMORIAL AFFAIRS

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

**Subcommittee Hearing—Legislative Hearing on H.R. 569, H.R. 570, H.R. 602, H.R. 671, H.R. 679, H.R. 733, H.R. 894 and H.R. 1405**

On April 16, 2013, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee held a legislative hearing on H.R. 569, Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2013; H.R. 570, American Heroes COLA Act; H.R. 602, Veterans' 2nd Amendment Protection Act; H.R. 671, Ruth Moore Act of 2013; H.R. 679, Honor America's Guard-Reserve Retirees Act; H.R. 733, Access to Veterans Benefits Improvement Act; H.R. 894, To amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the supervision of fiduciaries of veterans under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; and H.R. 1405, To amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to include an appeals form in any notice of decision issued for the denial of a benefit sought.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by The Honorable Bill Johnson, Member U.S. House of Representatives, The Honorable Chellie Pingree, Member U.S. House of Representatives, and The Honorable Timothy Walz, Member U.S. House of Representatives.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Jeffrey Hall, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Raymond Kelley, Director of National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Colonel Robert F. Norton, USA (Ret.), Deputy Director of Government Relations, Military Officers Association of America; Heather Ansley, Esq., MSW, Vice President of Veterans Policy VetsFirst, a program of United Spinal Association; and Michael D. Murphy, Executive Director, National Association of County Veterans Service Officers.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by representatives from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs specifically David R. McLenachen, Director, Pension and Fiduciary Service accompanied by: Mary Ann Flynn, Deputy Director, Policy and Procedures Compensation Service; and Richard Hipolit, Assistant General Counsel. See Legislative Hearing on H.R. 569, H.R. 570, H.R. 602, H.R. 671, H.R. 679, H.R. 733, H.R. 894 and H.R. 1405, Serial No. 113-16.

**Subcommittee Markup – Markup of H.R. 569, H.R. 570, H.R. 671, H.R. 894 and H.R. 1405**

On April 25, 2013, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs met to mark up H.R. 569, Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2013; H.R. 570, American Heroes COLA Act; H.R. 671, Ruth Moore Act of 2013; H.R. 894, To amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the supervision of fiduciaries of veterans under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; and H.R. 1405, To amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to include an appeals form in any notice of decision issued for the denial of a benefit sought.

On April 25, 2013, H.R. 569, Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2013, introduced by Rep. Runyan of NJ, passed the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs by voice vote. H.R. 569 was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee.

On April 25, 2013, H.R. 570, American Heroes COLA Act, introduced by Rep. Runyan of NJ, passed the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs by voice vote. H.R. 570 was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee.

On April 25, 2013, an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (A.N.S) to H.R. 671, Ruth Moore Act of 2013, introduced by Rep. Pingree of ME, was offered by Rep. Titus of NV and adopted by the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs by voice vote. H.R. 671, As Amended passed the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee.

On April 25, 2013, an Amendment to title 38 of H.R. 894, To amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the supervision of fiduciaries of veterans under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, introduced by Rep. Johnson of OH, passed the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee.

On April 25, 2013, an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (A.N.S) was offered to H.R. 1405, To amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to include an appeals form in any notice of decision issued for the denial of a benefit sought, introduced by Rep. Titus of NV, was offered by Rep. Titus of NV and adopted by the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs by voice vote. H.R. 1405, As Amended passed the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs by voice vote. H.R. 1405, As Amended was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee.

On May 22, 2013, H.R. 570, American Heroes COLA Act, was received in the Senate where it was Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

On June 6, 2013, H.R. 671, Ruth Moore Act of 2013, was received in the Senate where it was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

On June 25, 2013, H.R. 1405, as amended was reported by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H. Rept. 113-130.

On October 28, 2013, H.R. 1405, as amended passed the House on a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended and was agreed to by voice vote.

On October 29, 2013, H.R. 1405, as amended was referred to the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

**Subcommittee Hearing—Legislative Hearing on H.R. 1288, H.R. 1494, H.R. 1623, H.R. 1809, H.R. 2086, H.R. 2138, H.R. 2189, H.R. 2341, H.R. 2382 and H.R. 2423**

On June 28, 2013 the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a hearing on H.R.1288, World War II Merchant Mariner Service Act; H.R. 1494, Blue Water Navy Ship Accountability Act; H.R. 1623, VA Claims Efficiency Through Information Act of 2013; H.R. 1809, to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide notice of average times for processing claims and percentage of claims approved, and for other purposes; H.R. 2086, Pay As You Rate Act; H.R. 2138, Ending VA Claims Disability Backlog and Accountability Act; H.R. 2189, To establish a commission or task force to evaluate the backlog of disability claims of the Department of Veterans Affairs; H.R. 2341, Veterans Pension Protection Act; H.R. 2382, Prioritizing Urgent Claims for Veterans Act; and H.R. 2423, Disabled Veterans' Access to Medical Exams Improvement Act.

On the first panel, testimony was proved by The Honorable G.K. Butterfield, Member U.S. House of Representatives; The Honorable Christopher Gibson, Member U.S. House of Representatives; and The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Member U.S. House of Representatives.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Verna Jones, Director, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission The American Legion; Mr. Alexander Nicholson, Legislative Director, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; and Heather Ansley, Esq., MSW, Vice President of Veterans Policy VetsFirst, a program of United Spinal Association.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by Thomas Murphy, Director, Compensation Service U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs accompanied by: Richard Hipolit, Assistant General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See Legislative Hearing on H.R. 1288, H.R. 1494, H.R. 1623, H.R. 1809, H.R. 2086, H.R. 2138, H.R. 2189, H.R. 2341, H.R. 2382 and H.R. 2423, Serial No.113-27.

### **Subcommittee Markup – Markup of H.R. 2086, H.R. 2189, H.R. 2423**

On July 17, 2013, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs met to mark up H.R. 2086, Pay As You Rate Act; H.R. 2189, To establish a commission or task force to evaluate the backlog of disability claims of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and H.R. 2423, Disabled Veterans' Access to Medical Exams Improvement Act.

On July 17, 2013, an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (A.N.S) to H.R. 2086, introduced by Rep. Titus of Nevada, was offered by Rep. Titus of Nevada and adopted by the DAMA Subcommittee by voice vote. H.R. 2086, As Amended passed the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee.

On July 17, 2013, an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (A.N.S.) to H.R. 2189, To establish a commission or task force to evaluate the backlog of disability claims of the Department of Veterans Affairs, introduced by Rep. Miller of Florida, was offered by Rep. Runyan of New Jersey. An amendment to the A.N.S. to H.R. 2189 was offered by Ms. Titus of Nevada and adopted by the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs by voice vote. The A.N.S to H.R. 2189, as amended was adopted by the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs by voice vote. H.R. 2189, as amended passed the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee.

On July 17, 2013, an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (A.N.S) to H.R. 2423, Disabled Veterans' Access to Medical Exams Improvement Act, introduced by Rep. Runyan of New Jersey, was offered by Rep. Runyan of New Jersey. An Amendment to the A.N.S. to H.R. 2423 was offered by Rep. Titus of Nevada and adopted by the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs by voice vote. H.R. 2423, as amended passed the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee.

On September 27, 2013, H.R. 2189, as amended was reported by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H. Rept. 113-236.

On October 28, 2013, H.R. 2189, as amended passed the House on a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, and was agreed to by the Yeas and Nays: (2/3 required): 404 - 1 (Roll no. 561).

On October 29, 2013, H.R. 2189, as amended was referred to Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

## **OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES**

### **Subcommittee Site Visit – Los Angeles, California**

On January 28-31, 2013, the Staff Director of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs visited the Los Angeles Regional Office (RO), Los Angeles National Cemetery and Los Angeles County Veterans Court. The main purpose of the trip was to conduct oversight of the training being held at the RO, which was temporarily shut down for four weeks in an effort to address poor timeliness and quality concerns. In addition, staff conducted oversight of planned new columbarium construction at the cemetery and the overall process of the veterans court.

**Subcommittee Hearing—The 100% Temporary Disability Rating: An Examination of Its Effective Use**

On February 5, 2013, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a hearing on VA mishandling of temporary total disability ratings. The hearing noted the results of this neglect and purposed to identify areas of improvement improvements in the claims processing system.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Rich Weidman, Executive Director for Policy and Government Affairs, Vietnam Veterans of America; Ms. Linda Halliday, Assistant Inspector General for Audits and Evaluations Office of the Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs accompanied by: Mr. Larry Reinkemeyer, Director, Kansas City Audit Operations Division Office of the Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Brent Arronte, Director, San Diego Benefits Inspection Division Office of the Inspector General U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Ms. Diana Rubens, Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See The 100% Temporary Disability Rating: An Examination of Its Effective Use, Serial No.113-2.

**Subcommittee Site Visit – Baltimore, Maryland**

On March 4-5, 2013, the Staff Director of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs visited the Baltimore RO to conduct oversight of its operations due to increased media attention for poor performance and the decision to close the office for four weeks for re-training (as had been done at the LA RO) in April 2013.

**Subcommittee Site Visit – Baltimore, Maryland**

On March 12, 2013, the Staff Director of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs accompanied Chairman Miller to the Baltimore RO and VA adjudication academy to follow up on findings made during the previous week, emphasizing improvements to the office's poor performance and the agenda for the office's upcoming station enhancement training.

**Subcommittee Hearing—Sustaining the Sacred Trust: An Update on our National Ceremonies**

On April 10, 2013, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a hearing on the management and upkeep of Veterans' cemeteries domestic and abroad.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by The Honorable Steve L. Muro, Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, National Cemetery Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs accompanied by: Mr. Glenn Powers, Deputy Under Secretary for Field Programs,

National Cemetery Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Kathryn Condon, Executive Director of Army National Cemeteries Program, U.S. Department of Defense; and The Honorable Raymond Wollman, Deputy Secretary, American Battle Monuments Commission.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Ms. Linda Halliday, Assistant Inspector General for Audits and Evaluations Office of the Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs accompanied by: Ms. Cherie Palmer, Director, OIG Chicago Office of Audits and Evaluations Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by Ms. Diane M. Zumatto, National Legislative Director, AMVETS; and Ms. Ami Neilberger-Miller, Director of Outreach and Education Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors. See Sustaining the Sacred Trust: An Update on our National Ceremonies, Serial No.113-14.

#### **Subcommittee Hearing—Why are Veterans Waiting Years on Appeal?: A Review of the Post-Decision Process for Appealed Veterans' Disability Benefits Claims**

On June 18, 2013, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a hearing focused on the achievements of benchmark standards and accountability to improve the Veterans' claims backlog. The hearing also addressed next steps to ensure the claims process continues to be effective in meeting needs.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by representatives from the Department of Veterans Affairs including Mr. Keith Wilson, Director Roanoke Regional Office Veterans Benefits Administration; Ms. Laura Eskenazi, Principal Deputy Vice Chairman Board of Veterans' Appeals; Mr. Ronald S. Burke, Jr., Director Appeals Management Center National Capital Region Benefits Office Veterans Benefits Administration; and The Honorable Bruce E. Kasold, Chief Judge U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. See Why are Veterans Waiting Years on Appeal?: A Review of the Post-Decision Process for Appealed Veterans' Disability Benefits Claims, Serial No.113-22.

#### **Subcommittee Roundtable Discussion – Florida Delegation**

On July 9, 2013, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs assisted in the coordination of a bipartisan Roundtable for Members of the Florida delegation to discuss issues related to claims processing at the St. Petersburg Regional Office. Chairman Miller and Committee Member Corrine Brown co-hosted the event.

The Roundtable offered Members an opportunity to hear directly from the Under Secretary for Benefits, Allison A. Hickey, on VA's claims process for disability benefits, departmental transformation, Congressional relations, and the operations of the St. Petersburg Regional Office. Representatives from a majority of the Florida delegation also were in attendance.

#### **Subcommittee Site Visit – Tampa, Florida**

On July 12-16, 2013, the Staff Director of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs traveled to Tampa, FL to conduct oversight of the 33<sup>rd</sup> annual National Wheelchair Games, which is co-hosted by VA and Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA); St. Petersburg, FL, to conduct oversight of the Regional Office, including a focus on the Day One Brokering Center, Fully Developed Claims Initiative, and Veterans Benefits Management System, as well as the Bay Pines National Cemetery to conduct a general oversight tour; and

Sarasota, FL, to conduct oversight of the Sarasota National Cemetery's on-going construction projects.

**Subcommittee Site Visit – Winston-Salem, North Carolina**

On August 7-8, 2013, the Staff Director of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs traveled to the Winston-Salem RO to conduct oversight of the facility focusing on the Benefits Delivery at Discharge and Quick Start programs, as well as to take part in a Fully Developed Claims workshop.

**Subcommittee Site Visit – Atlanta, Georgia**

On August 19-22, 2013, the Staff Director of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs traveled to Atlanta, GA, to conduct oversight of the Atlanta RO, to include a VBMS demonstration; to conduct oversight of the Georgia National and Marietta National Cemeteries; and to tour the CACI scanning facility and receive a briefing from the vendor regarding the VA scanning contract.

**Subcommittee Site Visit – Dallas and El Paso, Texas**

On September 2-6, 2013, the Staff Director of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs accompanied Rep. Flores to Dallas/Ft. Worth, TX and El Paso TX, to conduct oversight of the Waco RO; participate in a panel discussion at the Veterans Resource Center of Dallas, TX; conduct oversight of the Dallas Ft. Worth National Cemetery; participate in a discussion regarding coordination of the William Beaumont Army Medical Center and VA Medical Center regarding VBA intake for El Paso/west Texas veterans; meet with service-members at Ft. Bliss regarding their participation in the IDES process, and conduct oversight of the Ft. Bliss National Cemetery.

**Subcommittee Hearing - Implementation Update: Fully Developed Claims**

On September 11, 2013 the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted a hearing to examine how VA is implementing its Fully Developed Claims program and how the program can improve VA's future claims processing efforts.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Tom Murphy, Director, Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by representatives from the following veterans service organizations, The American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, AMVETS, and the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs. See Implementation Update: Fully Developed Claims, Serial No. 113-34.

**Subcommittee Roundtable Discussion – Veterans' Appeals of Disability Claims**

On October 1, 2013, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs hosted a Roundtable on the topic of veterans' appeals of disability claims. This event brought together representatives from the Department of Veterans Affairs, including the Board of Veterans Appeals, as well as the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. VA reports that there are over 260,000 veterans' appeals pending. As the number of disability claims rises in the coming years, particularly as more combat veterans separate from service, the number of appeals is also projected to rise commensurately. Just as there is a tremendous backlog of claims pending at VA, there is a

backlog of appeals awaiting decisions from the Regional Offices, the Board of Veterans' Appeals, and the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. This roundtable discussion was designed to bring knowledgeable and interested parties to a single forum, whereat process, regulation, and law could be discussed and ideas for improvement could be fielded.

In addition to the Department and Court, participants included representatives from: Stetson University College of Law, Bergmann and Moore, LLC, Feinberg Rozen, LLP, Disabled American Veterans, the Federal Bar Association, former judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, National Organization of Veterans' Advocates, Inc., the National Veterans Legal Service Program, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett & Dunner, LLP, House Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Social Security staff, and Vietnam Veterans of America. Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs participated, as well as Subcommittee Chairman Jon Runyan.

#### **Subcommittee Site Visits – Arlington National Cemetery**

On October 6, 2013, Professional Staff Member of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs attended a Town Hall meeting held by Arlington National Cemetery, Executive Director, Patrick Hallinan. This Town Hall was coordinated in response to families' concerns on the memento policy within Section 60 of the cemetery, which is the location where the majority of OIF/OEF killed-in-action servicemembers are interred. A site-visit of Section 60 was conducted upon the conclusion of the discussion.

#### **Subcommittee Hearing - Focused Issues on Dignified Burials: A National Cemetery Update**

On October 30, 2013, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a hearing to examine the current state of various veterans' cemeteries across the country as well as the handoff of leadership and ongoing planning, design, and construction issues at Arlington National Cemetery.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Patrick K. Hallinan, Executive Director of Army National Cemeteries Program at the U.S. Department of Defense and Mr. Glenn Powers, Deputy Under Secretary for Field Programs, National Cemetery Administration with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Todd Kleismit, Director of Community & Government Relations with the Ohio Historical Society; Mr. Ray Kelley, Director of National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Ms. Ami Neiberger-Miller, Director of Outreach and Education

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors; and Ms. Diane M. Zumatto, National Legislative Director at AMVETS. See Focused Issues on Dignified Burials: A National Cemetery Update, Serial No. 113-40.

#### **Subcommittee Site Visits – Reno and Las Vegas, NV**

On November 4-8, 2013, the Staff Director of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs and Professional Staff Member travelled to Reno, NV, and Las Vegas, NV, to conduct oversight of the Reno Regional Office with Rep. Amodei; participate in a Town Hall with veterans in Reno, NV; conduct oversight of the Northern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery, which is a recipient of federal grants; conduct oversight of the remote VBA intake

center at the Las Vegas VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System; and, conduct oversight of the Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery, which is also a recipient of federal grants.

**Subcommittee Field Hearing - Complications of Geography: Focusing on VBA Outreach, Accessibility, Leadership and Staffing Efforts to Meet the Needs of Veterans Living in Areas Remote from a Regional Office**

On November 7, 2013, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted a field hearing at Las Vegas City Hall. The hearing highlight concerns specific to disabled veterans who do not live in close proximity to a VBA Regional Office, the outreach that VBA has undertaken to assist these veterans in filing disability benefits claims, the effectiveness of technological advancements for VBA's delivery of services, consideration of the staffing levels of VA Regional Offices, leadership accountability within those offices, and the challenges in claims' preparation that may be unique to disabled veterans within these remote areas.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Willie Clark, Western Area Director, Veterans Benefits Administration at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. Clark was accompanied by Mr. Edward Russell, Director, Reno Regional Office, Veterans Benefits Administration at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by, Ms. Katherine Miller, Executive Director, Nevada Department of Veterans Services; Ms. Janet Snyder, Legislative Chair, Society of Military Widows; and Mr. Bruce Hollinger, Adjutant Quartermaster, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Department of Nevada. See *Complications of Geography: Focusing on VBA Outreach, Accessibility, Leadership and Staffing Efforts to Meet the Needs of Veterans Living in Areas Remote from a Regional Office*, Serial No. 113-43.

**Subcommittee Roundtable Discussion – Pennsylvania Delegation**

On November 19, 2013, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs assisted in the coordination of a bipartisan Roundtable for Members of the Pennsylvania delegation to discuss the Philadelphia and Pittsburgh Regional Offices. Congressman Jim Gerlach and Congressman Michael F. Doyle co-hosted the event.

The Roundtable offered Members an opportunity to hear directly from the Under Secretary for Benefits, Allison A. Hickey, on VA's claims process for disability benefits, departmental transformation, Congressional relations, and the operations of the Pittsburgh and Philadelphia Regional Offices. Representatives Dent, Meehan, Kelly, and Fitzpatrick also were in attendance.

**Subcommittee Hearing - Adjudicating VA's Most Complex Disability Claims: Ensuring Quality, Accuracy and Consistency on Complicated Issues**

On December 4, 2013, the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs conducted a hearing focused on adjudicating disability claims that fall into the special-ops lane, such as Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Military Sexual Trauma (MST), and Special Monthly Compensation (SMC).

On the first panel, testimony was provided by YN1 Lauren Price, USN (Ret.), Public Affairs Representative of Veteran Warriors and was accompanied by MMCS James Price, USN (Ret.), Senior Logistics Chief of Veteran Warriors. Ms. Bettye McNutt, a surviving spouse also testified before the Subcommittee and was accompanied by Mr. Glenn R. Bergmann, Esquire of Bergmann & Moore, LLC.



On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Sherman Gillums, Associate Executive Director for Veterans Benefits with Paralyzed Veterans of America; Ronald Abrams, Esquire, Joint Executive Director of the National Veterans Legal Services Program; and Mr. Zach Hearn, Deputy Director for Claims for The American Legion.

Mr. Tom Murphy, Director Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs provided testimony on the third and final panel. Mr. Murphy was accompanied by, Ms. Edna MacDonald, Director of the Nashville Regional Office, Veterans Benefits Administration with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Ms. Sondra F. McCauley

Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Audits and Evaluations, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs also provided testimony and was accompanied by Mr. Brent Arronte, Director of San Diego Benefits Inspections Division, Office of Inspector General at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See Adjudicating VA's Most Complex Disability Claims: Ensuring Quality, Accuracy and Consistency on Complicated Issues, Serial No. 113-47.

## ACTIVITIES OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

### LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

#### **Subcommittee Hearing – Legislative Hearing on H.R. 357, H.R. 562, H.R. 631, H.R. 844, H.R. 1305, H.R. 1316, H.R. 1402, H.R. 1412, and a draft bill entitled “To amend title 38, United States Code, to extend the authority to provide work-study allowance for certain activities by individuals receiving educational assistance by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs” (H.R. 1453)**

On April 10, 2013, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a legislative hearing on H.R. 357, GI Bill Tuition Fairness Act of 2013; H.R. 562, VRAP Extension Act of 2013; H.R. 631, Servicemembers' Choice in Transition Act of 2013; H.R. 844, VetSuccess Enhancement Act; H.R. 1305, to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide clarification regarding eligibility for services under the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program; H.R. 1316, to amend title 38, United States Code, to specify the responsibilities of the Directors and Assistant Directors of Veterans' Employment and Training; H.R. 1402, Veterans Paralympic Act of 2013; H.R. 1412, Improving Job Opportunities for Veterans Act of 2013; and H.R. 1453, Work-Study for Student Veterans Act.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Curtis L. Coy, Deputy Under Secretary for Economic Opportunity, Veterans Benefits Administration U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs accompanied by: Mr. Danny Pummill, Director, Veterans Benefits Administration/Department of Defense Program, Office U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Susan Kelly, Deputy Director, Transition to Veterans Program Office, U.S. Department of Defense; and The Honorable Keith Kelly, Assistant Secretary, Veterans' Employment and Training Service, U.S. Department of Labor.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Charles Huebner, Chief of U.S. Paralympics, U.S. Olympic Committee; Dr. Susan Aldridge, Senior Fellow, American Association of State Colleges and Universities; Col. G. Michael Denning (USMC) Ret., Director of Graduate Military Programs University of Kansas on Behalf of Association of Public and Land Grant Universities; and Lt. Gen. Joseph F. Weber (USMC) Ret., Vice President for Student Affairs, Texas A&M University.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Alexander Nicholson, Chief Policy Officer, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; Mr. Ryan M. Gallucci, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Mr. Steve L. Gonzalez, Assistant Director, National Economic Commission, The American Legion; and Mr. Michael Dakduk, Executive Director Student Veterans America (SVA). See Legislative Hearing on H.R. 357, H.R. 562, H.R. 631, H.R. 844, H.R. 1305, H.R. 1316, H.R. 1402, H.R. 1412, and a draft bill entitled “To amend title 39, United States Code, to extend the authority to provide work-study allowance for certain activities by individuals receiving educational assistance by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs,” (H.R. 1453) Serial No.113-13.

#### **Subcommittee Markup of H.R. 357, H.R. 562, H.R. 631, H.R. 844, H.R. 1305, H.R. 1316, H.R. 1402, H.R. 1412, H.R. 1453**

On April 25, 2013, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met to mark up H.R. 357, GI Bill Tuition Fairness Act of 2013; H.R. 562, VRAP Extension Act of 2013; H.R. 631, Servicemembers' Choice in Transition Act of 2013; H.R. 844, VetSuccess Enhancement Act;

H.R. 1305, To amend title 38, United States Code, to provide clarification regarding eligibility for services under the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program; H.R. 1316, To amend title 38, United States Code, to specify the responsibilities of the Directors and Assistant Directors of Veterans' Employment and Training; H.R. 1402, Veterans Paralympic Act of 2013; H.R. 1412, Improving Job Opportunities for Veterans Act of 2013; H.R. 1453, Work-Study for Student Veterans Act.

On April 25, 2013, an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (A.N.S) H.R. 357, GI Bill Tuition Fairness Act of 2013, introduced by Chairman Miller of Florida, was offered by Rep. Jon Runyan of New Jersey and adopted by the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee by voice vote. H.R. 357, as amended passed the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On April 25, 2013, H.R. 562, VRAP Extension Act of 2013, passed the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On April 25, 2013, an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (A.N.S) H.R. 631, Servicemembers' Choice in Transition Act of 2013, introduced by Rep. Flores of Texas, was offered by Rep. Bill Flores of TX and adopted by the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee by voice vote. H.R. 631, As Amended, passed the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On April 25, 2013, H.R. 844, VetSuccess Enhancement Act, introduced by Rep. Takano of CA, passed the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On April 25, 2013, H.R. 1305, to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide clarification regarding eligibility for services under the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program, introduced by Rep. Wenstrup of OH, passed the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by Voice Vote.

On April 25, 2013, an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (A.N.S) H.R. 1316, to amend title 38, United States Code, to specify the responsibilities of the Directors and Assistant Directors of Veterans' Employment and Training," introduced by Rep. Flores of TX, was offered by Rep. Bill Flores of TX and adopted by the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee by voice vote. H.R. 1316, as amended passed the EO Subcommittee and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On April 25, 2013, H.R. 1402, Veterans Paralympic Act of 2013, introduced by Rep. Coffman of CO, passed the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On April 25, 2013, H.R. 1412, Improving Job Opportunities for Veterans Act of 2013, introduced by Rep. Coffman of CO, passed the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On April 25, 2013, H.R. 1453, Work-Study for Student Veterans Act, introduced by Rep. Takano of CA, passed the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On May 21, 2013, H.R. 1412, Improving Job Opportunities for Veterans Act of 2013, was received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

On June 3, 2013, H.R. 357, GI Bill Tuition Fairness Act of 2013 was placed on the Union Calendar, No.66.

On December XX, H.R. 1412, as amended the VA Expiring Authorities Extension Act of 2103, was received in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans Affairs.

**Subcommittee Legislative Hearing - H.R. 331, H.R. 821, H.R. 1357, H.R. 1796, H.R. 1842, H.R. 2011, H.R. 2150, H.R. 2210, H.R. 2327, and a draft legislation “To amend title 38, United States Code, to codify and improve the election requirements for the receipt of educational assistance under the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance program of the Department of Veterans Affairs.” (H.R. 2481)**

On June 26, 2013, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a hearing on H.R. 331, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to permit the centralized reporting of veteran enrollment by certain groups, districts, and consortiums of educational institutions; H.R. 821, to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to provide surviving spouses with certain protections relating to mortgages and mortgage foreclosures, and for other purposes; H.R. 1357, to amend the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 to improve the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program by providing assistance under such program for certain training programs that are considered less than full-time; H.R. 1796, Troop Talent Act of 2013; H.R. 1842, Military Family Home Protection Act; H.R. 2011, Veterans’ Advisory Committee on Education Improvement Act of 2013; H.R. 2150, Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Programs Reauthorization Act of 2013; H.R. 2210, Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship Improvements Act of 2013; H.R. 2327, Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration Act of 2013; and a draft legislation “To amend title 38, United States Code, to codify and improve the election requirements for the receipt of educational assistance under the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance program of the Department of Veterans Affairs.”

On the first panel, testimony was provided by The Honorable Ken Calvert (CA-42); The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings (MD-07); The Honorable John Delaney (MD-06); The Honorable Alan Grayson (FL-09); and The Honorable Bill Johnson (OH-06).

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Curtis L. Coy, Deputy Under Secretary for Economic Opportunity, Veterans Benefits Administration U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs accompanied by: Mr. John Brizzi, Deputy Assistant General Counsel U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Frank C. DiGiovanni, Director, Training Readiness and Strategy Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness U.S. Department of Defense.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Ryan M. Gallucci, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Mr. Jeffery Steele, Assistant Director, National Legislative Commission The American Legion; and MG Andrew “Drew” Davis, USMC (Ret. ) Executive Director The Reserve Officers Association. See Legislative Hearing on H.R. 331, H.R. 821, H.R. 1357, H.R. 1796, H.R. 1842, H.R. 2011, H.R. 2150, H.R. 2210, H.R. 2327, and a draft legislation To amend title 38, United States Code, to codify and improve the election requirements for the receipt of educational assistance under the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (H.R. 2481). Serial No. 113-25.

**Subcommittee Markup of H.R. 2210, H.R. 2327, H.R. 331, H.R. 1357, H.R. 1842, H.R. 2011, H.R. 2150, H.R. 2481**

On July 18, 2013, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met to mark up H.R. 2210, Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship Improvements Act of 2013; H.R. 2327, Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration Act of 2013; H.R. 331, To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to permit the centralized reporting of veteran enrollment by certain groups, districts, and consortiums of educational institutions; H.R. 1357, To amend the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 to improve the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program by providing assistance under such program for certain training programs that are considered less than full-time; H.R. 1842, Military Family Home Protection Act; H.R. 2011, Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education Improvement Act of 2013; H.R. 2150, Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Programs Reauthorization Act of 2013; H.R. 2481, Veterans G.I. Bill Enrollment Clarification Act of 2013.

On July 18, 2013, an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (A.N.S.) to H.R. 2210, Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship Improvements Act of 2013, was offered by Rep. Flores of Texas and adopted by the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee by voice vote. H.R. 2210, as amended, passed the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee.

An Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (A.N.S.) to H.R. 2327, Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration Act of 2013, was offered by Mr. Flores of Texas and adopted by the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee by voice vote. H.R. 2327, as amended, passed the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee.

On July 18, 2013, H.R. 331, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to permit the centralized reporting of veteran enrollment by certain groups, districts, and consortiums of educational institutions, introduced by Rep. Calvert of California, passed the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee by voice vote and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee.

On July 18, 2013, H.R. 1357, to amend the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 to improve the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program by providing assistance under such program for certain training programs that are considered less than full-time, introduced by Rep. Johnson of Ohio passed the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee by voice vote. H.R. 1357 was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee.

On July 18, 2013, H.R. 1842, Military Family Home Protection Act, introduced by Rep. Cummings of Maryland passed the EO Subcommittee by voice vote. H.R. 1842 was forwarded favorably to the Full Committee.

On July 18, 2013, H.R. 2011, Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education Improvement Act of 2013, introduced by Rep. Delaney of Maryland, passed the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee by voice vote. H.R. 2011 was forwarded favorably to the Full Committee.

On July 18, 2013, H.R. 2150, Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Programs Reauthorization Act of 2013, introduced by Rep. Cook of California, passed the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee by voice vote. H.R. 2150 was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee.

On July 18, 2013, H.R. 2481, Veterans G.I. Bill Enrollment Clarification Act of 2013, by Rep. Flores of Texas, passed the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee by voice vote. H.R. 2481 was forwarded favorably to the Full Committee.

On September 17, 2013, H.R. 2011 was reported by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H. Rept. 113-211.

On September 11, 2013, H.R. 2481, as amended was reported by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H. Rept. 113-207.

On October 28, 2013, H.R. 2011 passed the House on a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill and was agreed to by the Yeas and Nays: (2/3 required): 404 - 2 (Roll no. 562).

On October 28, 2013, H.R. 2481, as amended passed the House on a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended and was agreed to by voice vote.

On October 29, 2013, H.R. 2011 was referred to the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

On October 29, 2013, H.R. 2481, as amended was referred to the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

## OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

### **Subcommittee Hearing - Increasing the Functionality of Post 9/11 GI Bill Claims Processing to Reduce Delays**

On February 14, 2013, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a hearing to assess the viability of the automated system used to process Post-9/11 GI Bill Claims.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Michael Dakduk, Executive Director Student Veterans America (SVA); Ms. Kim Hall, Veterans Program Administrator, Humboldt State University, Vice President, National Association of Veterans Program Administrators (NAVPA); and Ms. Hayleigh Perez, Students Veterans Advocacy Group.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by the Honorable Roger W. Baker, Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs accompanied by: MG Robert M. Worley II USAF (Ret.), Director, Education Service Veterans Benefit Administration U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See Subcommittee Hearing on Increasing the Functionality of Post 9/11 GI Bill Claims Processing to Reduce Delays, Serial No.113-4.

### **Subcommittee Site Visit – Dumfries, VA**

On February 22, 2013, the Majority Staff Director and Professional Staff traveled to Dumfries, VA to tour a facility ran by the defense contractor Serco who operates the Department of Veterans Affairs "VA for Vets" program which encourages veterans to work for VA.

### **Subcommittee Hearing - Lowering the Rate of Unemployment for the National Guard and Reserve: Are We Making Progress?**

On March 14, 2013, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity subcommittee held a hearing on programs at the local, state, and Federal level that work to reduce unemployment for members of the National Guard and Reserve.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Ronald G. Young, Director, Family and Employer Program and Policy, U.S. Department of Defense; MG Terry M. Haston, Adjutant General, Tennessee National Guard; and Maj Ty Shepard, Director, California National Guard Employment Initiative.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Theodore (Ted) L. Daywalt, CEO and President VetJobs; Mr. John Barnes, Managing Partner and CEO Panther Racing; and Mr. Al Garver, Executive Director, Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States. See Subcommittee Hearing on Lowering the Rate of Unemployment for the National Guard and Reserve: Are We Making Progress? Serial No.113-10.

### **Site Visit – Muskogee, OK**

On March 27, 2013, Rep. Flores of Texas and the Majority Staff Director traveled to the Muskogee, OK regional processing office to view the national VA education call center and the long term solution for processing GI Bill claims.

### **Subcommittee Hearing - The Value of Education for Veterans at Public, Private and For-Profit Colleges and Universities**

On June 20, 2013, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a hearing the review of the values of education for veterans at different types of institutions of higher education.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Dr. Cynthia Azari Ed. D., President Riverside City College; Dr. Michael R. Smith, J.D., Ph.D., Vice Provost for Strategic Academic Initiatives University of Texas at El Paso; and Mr. Michael Dakduk, Executive Director Student Veterans America (SVA).

On the second panel, testimony was provided by The Honorable Steve Gunderson, President and CEO with the Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities (APSCU); Dr. Daniel J. Carey Ph.D., President Edgewood College On Behalf of: National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities; and Mr. David Baime, Senior Vice President for Government Relations and Policy Analysis American Association of Community Colleges.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by MG Robert M. Worley II USAF (Ret.), Director, Education Service Veterans Benefit Administration U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See Subcommittee Hearing on “The Value of Education for Veterans at Public, Private and For-Profit Colleges and Universities” Serial No.113-24.

### **Subcommittee Hearing - A Review of the Performance of the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) and the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP)**

On September 12, 2013, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session to review the performance of the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) and the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP).

The purpose of this hearing is to review the past successes and current challenges of VRAP and HVRP to ensure both programs are helping reintroduce as many veterans into the workforce as possible.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Curtis L. Coy Deputy Under Secretary for Economic Opportunity with the Veterans Benefit Administration at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Honorable Keith Kelly, Assistant Secretary Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) at the U.S. Department of Labor. See: A Review of the Performance of the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) and the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP), Serial No. 113-35.

### **Subcommittee Site Visit – Ft. Sill, OK**

On September 24 -27, Majority and Minority staff traveled to Ft. Sill, OK to review the Education Track which is part of the Transition Assistance Program. The track was being piloted at Ft. Sill and provides two days of instruction to transitioning servicemembers on how to best utilize their VA education benefits and choose an education/training program that is best for them.

### **Subcommittee Field Hearing - Examining Higher Education Institutions' Services to Veterans**

On November 4, 2013, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session in the Bradshaw Building at Riverside Community College in Riverside, CA to discuss efforts made to recruit veterans and help them adjust to life on campus and to review programs, services, and benefits provided to veterans by the invited institutions.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Dr. Cynthia Azari, Interim Chancellor, Riverside Community College District; Dr. Steven G. Brint, Vice-Provost, Undergraduate Education, University of California, Riverside and Ms. Pamela Daly, Campus President, DeVry University-San Diego.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Albert R. Renteria, Member, Small Business Taskforce with the American Legion; Mr. Sherrod Conyers, California Delegate, National Legislative Committee, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; and Mr. Marques Dredd, Former President, Veterans Club, Riverside City College. See: Examining Higher Education Institutions' Services to Veterans, Serial No. 113-41.

### **Subcommittee Field Hearing - Texas' Innovative Approaches to Jobs and Employment for Veterans**

On November 6, 2013, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session in the Bill Daniel Student Center at Baylor University in Waco, TX to discuss efforts made by institutions of higher learning, private sector companies, and government agencies to help Texas veterans adjust to civilian life.

On the first panel testimony was provided by Ms. Mary Kennedy Thompson, President, Mr. Rooter, LLC; Mr. David Amsden, Vice President, Human Resources, Cognizant Technology Solutions Mr. Chris Burton, Store Manager, The Home Depot; Mr. John Vizner, Facility Manager, Caterpillar Global Work Tools – Waco; and Mr. Joseph Kopser, CEO of RideScout.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Dr. Janet Bagby, VETS Coordinator, Senior Lecturer, Department of Education Psychology, Baylor University; Mr. Kris Cervantes, Veterans Specialist, McLennan Community College; Mr. Rob Wolaver, Executive Vice-President, Texas State Technical College – Waco; and Colonel Gerald "Jerry" L. Smith USMC (Ret.), Director Veteran Resource and Support Center.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Andres Alcantar, Chairman, Texas Workforce Commission and Mr. Shawn DeBay, Director, Veterans Employment Services, Texas Veterans Commission. See Texas' Innovative Approaches to Jobs and Employment for Veterans, Serial No. 113-42.

### **Subcommittee Hearing - VA's Independent Living Program-A Program Review**

On November 13, 2013 the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in open session to examine the Department of Veterans Affairs' Independent Living Program. The program is designed to help service-connected disabled veterans whose disabilities prevent them from finding employment live more meaningful, independent lives.

The purpose of this hearing was to examine VA's efforts to implement GAO's recommendations.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Daniel Bertoni the Director of the Education, Workforce, and Income Security at U.S. Government Accountability Office.



On the second panel, testimony was provided by Ms. Margarita Devlin, Acting Director, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment with the Veterans Benefits Administration at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Richard C. Daley the Associate Legislation Director of the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) and Mr. Paul R. Varela the Assistant National Legislative Director of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV). See VA's Independent Living Program-A Program Review, Serial No. 113-45.

## ACTIVITIES OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH

### LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

#### **Subcommittee Legislative Hearing—Legislative Hearing on Draft Legislation, ‘The Veterans Integrated Mental Health Care Act of 2013;’ Draft Legislation, ‘The Demanding Accountability for Veterans Act of 2013;’ H.R. 241; H.R. 288; H.R. 984; and, H.R. 1284**

On May 21, 2013, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on H.R. 241, the Veterans Timely Access to Health Care Act; H.R. 288, the CHAMPVA Children's Protection Act of 2013; H.R. 984, to direct the Secretary of Defense to establish a task force on urotrauma; and, H.R. 1284, to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for coverage under the beneficiary travel program of the Department of Veterans Affairs of certain disabled veterans for travel for certain special disabilities rehabilitation, and for other purposes.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by the Honorable Dennis Ross, U.S. House of Representatives, 15<sup>th</sup> District, Florida; and, the Honorable Brett Guthrie, U.S. House of Representatives, 2<sup>nd</sup> District, Kentucky.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mark Edney, FACS, Member, Legislative Affairs Committee and Urotrauma Task Force, the American Urological Association; Michael O'Rourke, Assistant Director of Governmental Relations, Blinded Veterans Association; Adrian Atizado, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Alex Nicholson, Legislative Director, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; and, Alethea Predeoux, Associate Director, Health Analysis, Paralyzed Veterans of America.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by Robert L. Jesse, MD, Ph.D., Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. He was accompanied by Susan Blauert, Deputy Assistant General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See Legislative Hearing on Draft Legislation, ‘The Veterans Integrated Mental Health Care Act of 2013;’ Draft Legislation, ‘The Demanding Accountability for Veterans Act of 2013;’ H.R. 241; H.R. 288; H.R. 984; and H.R. 1284, Serial No. 113-19.

#### **Subcommittee Legislative Hearing – Legislative Hearing on ‘Draft Legislation, the Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act’; H.R. 1443; H.R. 1612; H.R. 1702; and, H.R. 2065**

On July 9, 2013, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on ‘Draft Legislation, the Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act’; H.R. 1443, the Tinnitus Research and Treatment Act of 2013; H.R. 1612, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to convey a parcel of land in Tuskegee, Alabama, to Tuskegee University, and for other purposes; H.R. 1702, the Veterans Transportation Service Act; and, H.R. 2065, the Safe Housing for Homeless Veterans Act.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by the Honorable Mike Rogers, Member, U.S. House of Representatives, 3<sup>rd</sup> District, Alabama; and, the Honorable David McKinley, Member, U.S. House of Representatives, 1<sup>st</sup> District, West Virginia.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Jacob B. Gadd, Deputy Director for Healthcare, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Susan E. Shore Ph.D., Chair, Scientific Advisory Committee, American Tinnitus Association; Adrian

Atizado, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Robert Drexler, Member, Board of Directors, International Code Council; and, Raymond C. Kelley, Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by Robert L. Jesse, MD, Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health Veterans Health Administration U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The Principal Deputy Under Secretary was accompanied by Susan Blauert, Deputy Assistant General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See Subcommittee Hearing – Legislative Hearing on ‘Draft Legislation, the Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act’; H.R. 1443; H.R. 1612; H.R. 1702; H.R. 2065; Serial No. 113-28.

### **Subcommittee Markup of H.R. 1443, H.R. 1612, H.R. 2065, H.R. 2072, and, H.R. 2726**

On July 23, 2013, the Subcommittee on Health met and marked up H.R. 1443, the Tinnitus Research and Treatment Act of 2013; H.R. 1612, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to convey a parcel of land in Tuskegee, Alabama, to Tuskegee University, and for other purposes; H.R. 2065, the Safe Housing for Homeless Veterans Act; H.R. 2072, the Demanding Accountability for Veterans Act of 2013; and, H.R. 2726, the Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act.

On July 23, 2013, an amendment to H.R. 1443, the Tinnitus Research and Treatment Act of 2013, was offered by Ms. Brownley of CA. The amendment was adopted by the Subcommittee on Health by voice vote. H.R. 1443, as Amended, passed the Subcommittee on Health and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On July 23, 2013, H.R. 1612, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to convey a parcel of land in Tuskegee, Alabama, to Tuskegee University, and for other purposes, passed the Subcommittee on Health and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On July 23, 2013, an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (A.N.S) to H.R. 2065, the Safe Housing for Homeless Veterans Act, was offered by Mr. Benishek of MI. The A.N.S. to H.R. 2065 was adopted by the Subcommittee on Health by voice vote. H.R. 2065, as Amended, passed the Subcommittee on Health and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On July 23, 2013, H.R. 2072, the Demanding Accountability for Veterans Act of 2013, passed the Subcommittee on Health and was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On July 23, 2013, H.R. 2726, the Long Term Care Veterans Choice Act, was withdrawn from the Subcommittee on Health’s markup agenda by Unanimous Consent.

On August 1, 2013, H.R. 1443 and H.R. 2072, as amended, were marked up by the Full Committee and ordered to be reported by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs by voice vote. See H. Rept. 113-245.

On October 16, 2013, H.R. 2072, as amended, was reported and placed on the Union Calendar, Calendar No. 173.

On October 22, 2013, H.R. 1443 was ordered to be reported by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and placed on the Union Calendar, Calendar No. 175. See H. Rept. 113-247.

## OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

### **Subcommittee Oversight Hearing—Meeting Patient Care Needs: Measuring the Value of VA Physician Staffing Standards**

On March 13, 2013, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing on the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) productivity standards. On the first panel, testimony was provided by Linda A. Halliday, Assistant Inspector General for Audits and Evaluations, Office of the Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. She was accompanied by Mr. Larry Reinkemeyer, Director, Kansas City Audit Operations Division, Office of the Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Testimony was also provided by: Larry H. Conway B.S., R.R.T, Director of Communications, National Association of Veterans Affairs Physicians and Dentists; and, Madhulika Agarwal MD, M.P.H., Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Policy and Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Dr. Agarwal was accompanied by Jeffrey A. Murawsky MD, Director, Great Lakes Health Care System (VISN 12), Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Carter Mecher MD, Senior Medical Advisor, Office of Public Health, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See Meeting Patient Care Needs: Measuring the Value of VA Physician Staffing Standards, Serial No.113-8.

### **Subcommittee Roundtable Discussion – Advancing Solutions for Patient-Centered Procurement Reform**

On April 18, 2013, the Subcommittee on Health conducted a roundtable discussion regarding the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) procurement reform.

Roundtable participants included: Joy J. Ilem, Deputy National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Jonathan Pruden, Southeast Regional Director, Wounded Warrior Project; Pat McKay, Director of Federal Government Contracts, Philips Healthcare on behalf of the Medical Imaging Technology Alliance; Jacob Gadd, Deputy Director for Healthcare, The American Legion; Raymond Kelley, Director of the National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Carl Blake, National Legislative Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Alethea Predcoux, Associate Director of Health Analysis, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Peter Thomas, Counsel, National Association for the Advancement of Orthotics and Prosthetics; Christina Roof, Legislative Associate, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; Richard Weidman, Executive Director for Policy and Government Affairs, Vietnam Veterans of America; Mark Hopkins, Clinical Director, Dankmeyer, Inc., on behalf of the American Orthotic and Prosthetic Association; Phillip Matovsky, Associate Deputy Undersecretary for Health for Administrative Operations, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Lucille Beck Ph.D, Chief Consultant for Rehabilitation and Prosthetic Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Joseph Miller Ph.D, National Program Director, Orthotic and Prosthetic Service, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and, Jan Frye, Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Acquisition and Logistics, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

### **Subcommittee Hearing—Safety for Survivors: Care and Treatment for Military Sexual Trauma**

On July 19, 2013, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing regarding the care and treatment available to survivors of military sexual trauma (MST).

On the first panel, testimony was provided by veteran survivors of MST.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Michael Shepherd M.D, Physician, Office of Health Care Inspections, Office of the Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Dr. Shepard was accompanied by Karen McGoff-Yost LCSW, Associate Director, Bay

Pines Office of Healthcare Inspections Office of the Inspector General U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Testimony was also provided by Jonathan M. Farrell-Higgins Ph.D., Chief, Stress Disorder Treatment Program, Colmery-O'Neil VA Medical Center, VA Eastern Kansas Health Care System, Veterans Integrated Service Network 15, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and Carol O'Brien Ph.D., Chief, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Programs, Bay Pines VA Healthcare System, Veterans Integrated Service Network 8, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by Rajiv Jain MD, Assistant Deputy Undersecretary for Patient Care Services, Office of Patient Care Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Dr. Jain was accompanied by: David Carroll Ph.D., Acting Chief Consultant, Mental Health Services, Office of Patient Care Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Stacey Pollack Ph.D., National Mental Health Director of Program Policy Implementation, Mental Health Services, Office of Patient Care Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Testimony was also provided by Karen S. Guice MD, M.P.P, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, Office of Health Affairs, U.S. Department of Defense. See Subcommittee Hearing on Safety for Survivors: Care and Treatment for Military Sexual Trauma, Serial No. 113-31.

#### **Site Visit – Houston, Lubbock, and Dallas, Texas**

On August 27-30, 2013, the Staff Director of the Subcommittee on Health traveled to Houston, Lubbock, and Dallas, Texas, to accompany the Chairman at oversight visits to evaluate the clinical operations of the Michael E. DeBakey Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC); the Lubbock VA Outpatient Clinic; and, the Dallas VAMC.

#### **Subcommittee Oversight Field Hearing— Making a Difference: Shattering Barriers to Effective Mental Health Care for Veterans**

On September 17, 2013, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session to conduct an oversight field hearing to examine how Ohio's Veterans Integrated Service Network 10, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Healthcare System of Ohio, is addressing common barriers to care that veterans often face when attempting to access mental health care services.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by veterans and veterans' surviving family members.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Linda D. Smith, FACHE, Medical Center Director, Cincinnati VA Medical Center, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. She was accompanied by: Kathleen M. Chard, Ph.D. Director, Cognitive Processing Therapy Implementation and Director, Trauma Recovery Center, Cincinnati VA Medical Center, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Emma Bunag-Boehm, Primary Care Provider, OEF/OIF/OND Clinic; Clinician, Persian Gulf Registry, Cincinnati VA Medical Center, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and, Chadwick Watiker, Cincinnati Vet Center Team Lead, Readjustment Counseling Service, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See Making a Difference: Shattering Barriers to Effective Mental Health Care for Veterans, Serial No. 113-36.

#### **Site Visit – Cincinnati, Ohio**

On September 15-17, 2013, the Staff Director and Professional Staff Member for the Subcommittee on Health traveled to Cincinnati, Ohio, to staff the Subcommittee oversight field hearing entitled, "Making a Difference: Shattering Barriers to Effective Mental Health Care for Veterans" and conduct oversight visits at the Cincinnati Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center and the University of Cincinnati's C-STAR and Institute of Military Medicine Programs.

#### **Site Visit – Tampa, Florida**

On September 22-24, 2013, the Staff Director for the Subcommittee on Health traveled to Tampa, Florida, to conduct oversight visits at the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program Launch, the James A. Haley Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC), and the Bay Pines VAMC.

#### **Subcommittee Oversight Hearing - Between Peril and Promise: Facing the Dangers of VA's Skyrocketing Use of Prescription Painkillers to Treat Veterans**

On October 10, 2013, the Subcommittee on Health met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing regarding the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) pain management programs and the use of medications, particularly opioids, to treat veterans experiencing acute and chronic pain. On panel one, testimony was provided by veterans and veterans' surviving family members.

On panel two, testimony was provided by Pamela J. Gray MD; Claudia H. Bahorik DO; and, Steven Scott MD, Chief of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Service, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by Robert L. Jesse, MD, Ph.D., Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. He was accompanied by Robert Kerns, Ph.D., National Director for Pain Research, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See *Between Peril and Promise: Facing the Dangers of VA's Skyrocketing Use of Prescription Painkillers to Treat Veterans*, Serial No. 113-39.

#### **Subcommittee Oversight Roundtable – Addressing Operational Challenges to Ensure Accurate and Optimal VA Third Party Collections**

On November 14, 2013, the Subcommittee on Health conducted a roundtable discussion regarding opportunities to improve patient care by optimizing the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) authority to bill and collect from third-party health insurance companies for non-service connected care provided to certain veterans.

The Roundtable participants included: Steven "Griff" Griffin, President and Co-Founder, eReceivables; Greg Snyder, National Director for Government Services, eReceivables; Allen Fredrickson, MCE, President and Chief Executive Officer, Signature Performance Inc.; Michelle Swertzic, Director of Client Services, Signature Performance; Paul Johnson, Managing Director, Huron Healthcare; Robert Parris, Senior Director, Huron Healthcare; The Honorable Nelson M. Ford, President and Chief Executive Officer, Logistics Management Institute; Cyndi Kindred, Deputy Chief Business Officer for Purchased Care, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Stephanie Mardon, Deputy Chief Business Officer for Revenue Operations, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Susan Reed, Deputy Executive Director for Consolidated Patient Account Centers, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Philip Matkovsky, Assistant Deputy

Under Secretary for Health for Administrative Operations, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Members of the Subcommittee on Health also attended the roundtable.

## ACTIVITIES OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT & INVESTIGATIONS

### LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

#### **Legislative Hearing on H.R. 1490 ‘Veterans’ Privacy Act;’ H.R. 1792, ‘Infectious Disease Reporting Act;’ and H.R. 1804, ‘Foreign Travel Accountability Act’**

On June 19, 2013, the Subcommittee held a legislative hearing on H.R. 1490, Veterans’ Privacy Act, H.R. 1792, Infectious Disease Reporting Act, H.R. 1804, Foreign Travel Accountability Act.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by The Honorable Jeff Miller, Member United States House of Representatives; and The Honorable Tim Huelskamp, Member United States House of Representatives.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Dr. Robert L. Jesse, Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health Veterans Health Administration U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs accompanied by: Ms. Jane Clare Joyner, Deputy Assistant General Counsel U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by Dr. Timothy F. Jones, Tennessee State Epidemiologist President Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists; Mr. Nick McCormick, Legislative Associate Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, and Dr. Paul Etkind, Senior Director of Infectious Diseases National Association of County and City Health Officials. See Legislative Hearing on H.R. 1490 ‘Veterans’ Privacy Act;’ H.R. 1792, ‘Infectious Disease Reporting Act;’ and H.R. 1804, ‘Foreign Travel Accountability Act,’ Serial No. 113-23.

#### **Subcommittee Markup of H.R. 1490, H.R. 1792, and H.R. 1804**

On June 27, 2013, the Subcommittee met and marked up H.R. 1490, the Veterans’ Privacy Act; H.R. 1792, the Infectious Disease Reporting Act; and H.R. 1804, the Foreign Travel Accountability Act.

On June 27, 2013, an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (A.N.S) to H.R. 1490, the Veterans’ Privacy Act, introduced by Rep. Jeff Miller of FL, was offered by Rep. Coffman of Colorado. The ANS to H.R. 1490 was adopted by the Oversight and Investigations (O&I) Subcommittee by voice vote. H.R. 1490, as amended passed the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee. H.R. 1490 was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On June 27, 2013, an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (A.N.S) to H.R. 1792, the Infectious Disease Reporting Act, was offered by Rep. Coffman of CO., an amendment to the (A.N.S) to H.R. 1792 was offered by Rep. O’Rourke of TX. The amendment to the A.N.S to H.R. 1792 offered by Rep. O’Rourke failed the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee. The Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (A.N.S) to H.R.1792, offered by Rep. Coffman, was agreed to by the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee by voice vote. H.R. 1792, as amended passed the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee. H.R. 1792, as amended was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

June 27, 2013, an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (A.N.S) to H.R. 1804, Foreign Travel Accountability Act, was offered by Rep. Huelskamp of Kansas. The Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (A.N.S) to H.R. 1804 was agreed to by the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee by voice vote. H.R. 1804, as amended passed the Oversight and



Investigations Subcommittee. H.R. 1804 was favorably forwarded to the Full Committee by voice vote.

On August 1, 2103, H.R. 1804 was marked up by the Full Committee and ordered to be reported as amended by voice vote.

On September 25, 2013, H.R. 1804 was reported as amended by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and placed on the Union Calendar, Calendar No. 167. See H. Rept. 113-227.

On October 4, 2103, SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT FILING AUTHORITY - Mr. Miller of Florida asked unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be permitted to file a supplemental report on H.R. 1804 and the motion was agreed to without objection.

On October 7, 2013, a supplemental report was filed by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, H. Rept. 113-227, Part II.

## OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

### **Subcommittee Hearing—Analyzing the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Actions to Prevent Legionnaire's Disease in Pittsburgh**

On February 5, 2013, the Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations met to discuss VA officials' knowledge of Legionella contamination at the Pittsburgh VAMC and their response to this knowledge. This hearing purposed that the testimony supplied would inform efforts to create a standard, nation-wide protocol to respond to Legionella.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Dr. Robert Jesse, Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Lauri Hicks, Medical Epidemiologist, National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, Center for Disease Control and Prevention Accompanied by: Mr. Mike Moreland, Network Director, VISN 4, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Gary Roselle, Chief, Medical Service Program Director, Infectious Diseases, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Dr. Victor L. Yu, Professor of Medicine, University of Pittsburgh; Dr. Janet Stout, Director, Special Pathogens Laboratory; Mr. Aaron Marshall, Operations Manager, Enrich Products, Inc.; Mr. Steve Schira, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Liquitech, Inc.; Ms. Kathleen Dahl, President, AFGE Local 2028, Pittsburgh Veterans Affairs Medical Center. See Analyzing VA's Actions to Prevent Legionnaire's Disease in Pittsburgh, Serial No.113-1.

### **Subcommittee Hearing—Gulf War: What Kind of Care are Veterans Receiving 20 Years Later?**

On March 13, 2013, the Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations held a hearing to assess the effectiveness of current practices to identify, diagnose, and treat Gulf War Illness. This hearing's focus was to note how the tools and processes in place can be improved.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Dr. Lea Steele, Research Professor of Biomedical Studies & Director, Veterans Health Research Program, Baylor University; Dr. Steven S. Coughlin, Adjunct Professor of Epidemiology, Emory University; Dr. Bernard M. Rosof, Chairman, Board of Directors, Huntington Hospital Chair, Committee on Gulf War and Health: Treatment for Chronic Multisymptom Illness Institute of Medicine of the National Academies; and Mr. Anthony Hardie, Gulf War Veteran.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Dr. Victoria Davey, Chief Officer, Office of Public Health and Environmental Hazards Veterans Health Administration U.S.

Department of Veterans Affairs accompanied by: Dr. Maureen McCarthy, Deputy Chief, Patient Care Services Office Veterans Health Administration U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Stephen Hunt, Director, Post-Deployment Integrated Care initiative U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Gavin West, Acting Chief Medical Officer Salt Lake City VAMC Special Assistant, Office of the Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Clinical Operations U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Tom Murphy, Director of Compensation Service Veterans Benefits Administration U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See Gulf War: What Kind of Care are Veterans Receiving 20 Years Later? Serial No. 113-8.

**Subcommittee Hearing—Waiting for Care: Examining Patient Wait Times at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**

On March 14, 2013, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations met to discuss current VA practices for monitoring patient wait time in VA facilities. This hearing purposed to highlight potential solutions to the issue, particularly regarding policy improvement and systemic reform.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Mr. William Schoenhard, FACHE, Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management Veterans Health Administration U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Accompanied by: Mr. Thomas Lynch, M.D., Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health Clinical Operations and Management Veterans Health Administration U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Philip Matkovsky, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health Clinical Operations and Management Veterans Health Administration U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Michael Davies, M.D., National Director of Systems Redesign Veterans Administration U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Debra A. Draper, Director, Health Care Government Accountability Office; and Mr. Roscoe Butler, National Field Service Representative Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission The American Legion. See Waiting for Care: Examining Patient Wait Times at VA, Serial No.113-11.

**Subcommittee Hearing—Joint Subcommittee Hearing of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations and SBC Subcommittee on Contracting and Workforce: Consistently Inconsistent: Challenges for Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses**

On March 19, 2013, the subcommittees held an oversight hearing on statutory, regulatory and interpretive differences between the Small Business Administration (SBA) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) contracting programs for small businesses owned and controlled by service-disabled Veterans.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Joseph Wynn, Special Advisor, VET-Force; Mr. Davy Leghorn, Assistant Director, National Economic Division, American Legion; Mr. Marc Goldschmitt, PMP, CEO, Goldschmitt and Associates, LLC; and Mr. Jonathan T. Williams, Partner, PilieroMazza, PLLC.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. William Shear, Director, Financial Markets and Community Investment, U.S. Government Accountability Office; Mr. A. John Shoraka, Associate Administrator, Office of Government Contracting and Business Development, U.S. Small Business Administration; and Mr. Tom Leney, Executive Director, Veterans and Small Business Programs, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See Joint Subcommittee Hearing of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee Subcommittee on Oversight

& Investigations & Small Business Committee Subcommittee on Contracting and Workforce: Consistently Inconsistent: Challenges for Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses, this hearing was hosted by the Small Business Committee and therefore does not have a House Veterans' Affairs Committee serial number.

**Subcommittee Hearing—Department of Veterans Affairs Construction Policy: Failed Plans Result In Plans That Fail**

On May 7, 2013, the Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations met to discuss the failure of the VA to adequately undertake—in planning and timely payment—multiple building projects of various scale.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Ms. Lorelei St. James, Director of Physical Infrastructure Issues, Government Accountability Office; Mr. Raymond Kelley, Director of Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Mr. Glenn D. Haggstrom, Principal Executive Director Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs accompanied by: Ms. Stella Fiotes, Executive Director Construction and Facilities Management Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See VA Construction Policy: Failed Plans Result In Plans That Fail, Serial No.113-18.

**Subcommittee Roundtable Discussion - Claims Backlog**

On May 17, 2013, the Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations conducted a Claims Backlog Roundtable, which focused on establishing a revised evidenced based process that will break the claims backlog and provide veterans access to their earned benefits within a reasonable timeframe. The event brought together government representatives and private industry leaders with experience in product tracking and claims processing.

Chairman Miller and Ranking Member Michaud were in attendance in addition to the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee Chairman, Mike Coffman. Representatives from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and several veterans service organizations were also in attendance.

**Subcommittee Roundtable Discussion – Electronic Health Records**

On May 23, 2013, the Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations conducted an iEHR Roundtable which was a public-private forum focused on sharing of industry best practices and providing architectural guidance to federal agency stakeholders to assist with the creation of a standards-based reusable data sharing service.

The purpose of the roundtable was to enable interoperable exchange of healthcare data (clinical and business oriented data) between legacy and new electronic medical record systems – within the Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Defense, and private sector healthcare providers.

Participants included representatives from: Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, Interagency Program Office, Office of Management and Budget, 3M, Cisco, Dell, GE Healthcare, HP, IBM, Intel, Intersystems, Information Technology Acquisition Advisory Council, KaMedData, Microsoft, National Institute of Standards & Technology, Open Source Electronic Health Record Agent, Oracle, and Redhat. House Veterans' Affairs Committee Ranking Member Michael Michaud, and Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee Chairman Mike Coffman were also in attendance.

### **Subcommittee Hearing—How Secure is Veterans' Private Information?**

On June 4, 2013 the Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations held a hearing on the recent breach of security in the VA Office of Information and Technology, noting permissive factors and evaluating the VA's insufficient response to the breach.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Ms. Linda A. Halliday, Assistant Inspector General for Audits and Evaluations Office of Inspector General U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs accompanied by: Ms. Sondra McCauley, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Audits and Evaluations Office of Inspector General U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Michael Bowman, Director, Information Technology and Security Audits Division Office of Inspector General U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Stephen W. Warren, Acting Assistant Secretary, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs accompanied by: Mr. Stan Lowe, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Information Security Office of Information and Technology U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Jerry L. Davis, Former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Information Security Office of Information and Technology U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See How Secure is Veterans' Private Information? Serial No. 113-21.

### **Subcommittee Hearing - Correcting "Kerfuffles" – Analyzing Prohibited Practices and Preventable Patient Deaths at Jackson VAMC**

On November 13, 2013, the Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations met in open session to examine whether Department of Veterans Affairs officials are seriously addressing patient care issues at the G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Medical Center in Jackson, Mississippi.

On the first pane, testimony was provided by Dr. Phyllis Hollenbeck, M.D., FAAFP, Former Physician of Family Medicine at the G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Medical Center; Dr. Charles Sherwood, M.D., Former Chief of Ophthalmology, G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Medical Center; Erik Hearon, Maj. Gen. (Ret.), United States Air Force and Mr. Charles Jenkins, President, American Federation of Government Employees, Local 589.

During the second panel, testimony was provided by Ms. Rica Lewis-Payton, VISN-16 Network Director, G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Medical Center; Dr. Gregg Parker, M.D., VISN-16 Neurologist and Chief Medical Officer, G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Medical Center; and Mr. Joe Battle, Director, G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Medical Center. See Correcting 'Kerfuffles' – Analyzing Prohibited Practices and Preventable Patient Deaths at Jackson VAMC Serial No. 113-44.

### **Subcommittee Member Briefing – VA Cyber Security Deficiencies**

On December 3, 2013, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations conducted a briefing for Members of the Full Committee which focused on numerous problems plaguing cyber security in the VA, such as a lack of security controls, outdated workstations, numerous security vulnerabilities, and a lack of transparency and accountability.

Two renowned cyber security experts were brought in to validate and substantiate these findings and provide credibility to the threats to VA's network and the potential loss of Veterans' personal information.

**Subcommittee Hearing—Joint Subcommittee Hearing of the HVAC Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations & SBC Subcommittee on Contracting and Workforce: Contracting Away Accountability – Reverse Auctions in Federal Agency Acquisitions**

On December 11, 2013, the Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigation and the House Small Business Subcommittee on Contracting and Workforce met in open session to address serious problems with VA and other federal agencies' use of reverse auctions in contract bids, including questions regarding fees paid, vendor competition, and agency oversight.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Nigel Cary, President of Cox Construction Company and Mr. Louis J. Celli Jr., Director, Legislative Division of the American Legion.

On panel two, testimony was provided by Ms. Michelle Mackin, Director, Acquisition and Sourcing Management with the Government Accountability Office; Mr. Joseph Jordan, Administrator in the Office of Federal Procurement Policy within the Office of Management and Budget; and Mr. William Sisk, Deputy Commissioner, Federal Acquisition Service and General Services Administration.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Jan Frye, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Acquisitions and Logistics at the Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. Frye was accompanied by Mr. Philip Matkovsky, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Administrative Operations Veterans Health Administration. See Contracting Away Accountability – Reverse Auctions in Federal Agency Acquisitions Serial No. 113-48.

## EXECUTIVE BRANCH COMMUNICATIONS

**January 3, 2013:** Communication 09041, a letter from the Deputy General Counsel, Office of General Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule - Copayments for Medications in 2013 (RIN: 2900-AO58) received January 3, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801 (a) (1) (A).

**February 15, 2013:** Communication 00489, a letter from the Secretary of the Army, Department of Defense, transmitting a report on reservations made for interment at Arlington National Cemetery, as required by Section 602 of Public Law 112-154. Received February 6, 2013.

**February 15, 2013:** Communication 00476, a letter from the Director of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule- Disclosures to Participate in State Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs (RIN: 2900-AO45) received February 14, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801 (a) (1) (A).

**March 7, 2013:** Communication 00638, a letter from the Director of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule – Grants for the Rural Veterans Coordination Pilot (RVCP) (RIN: 2900-A035) received February 26, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801 (a) (1) (A).

**March 7, 2013:** Communication 00639, a letter from the Director of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule – VA Homeless providers Grant and Per Diem Program (RIN: 2900-AN81) received February 26, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801 (a) (1) (A).

**March 12, 2013:** Communication 00670, a letter from the Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting First Quarterly Report of FY 2013 under The Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2008. Referred jointly to the Committees on the Judiciary and Veterans' Affairs.

**April 12, 2013:** Communication 01098, a letter from the Director of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule – Removal of 30- Day Residency Requirement for Per Diem Payments (RIN: 2900-AO36) received March 26, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801 (a) (1) (A).

**April 15, 2013:** Communication 01116, a letter from the Director of Regulation and Management, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule – Grants for Transportation of Veterans in High Rural Areas (RIN: 2900-AO01) received April 2, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801 (a) (1) (A).

**April 24, 2013:** A message from the President of the United States transmitting the Administration's 2013 National Drug Control Strategy, pursuant to 21 U.S.C. 1504.

**April 25, 2013:** Communication 01309, a letter from the Director of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule- Grants to States for Construction or Acquisition of State Homes (RIN: 2900-AO60) received April 10, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801 (a) (1) (A).

**May 8, 2013:** Memorial 0024, Title presented by the Speaker: A memorial of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, relative to a Senate Resolution requesting the Federal Government provide sufficient funding and personnel to process veterans' claims in a more timely manner.

**May 15, 2013:** Communication 01503, a letter from the Director of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the

Department's final rule – Payment for Home Health Services and Hospice Care to Non-VA Providers ( RIN: 2900- AN98) received May 6, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801 (a) (1) (A).

**May 16, 2013:** Memorial 0029 presented as follows by the Speaker: A memorial of the House of Representatives of the State of Oregon, relative to House Joint Memorial No.1 requesting that the Congress overturn the Department of Veterans Affairs regulation prohibiting the provision of service or therapy dogs for veterans with emotional and mental disabilities.

**May 23, 2013:** Communication 01609, a letter from the Director of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule - Tentative Eligibility Determinations; Presumptive Eligibility for Psychosis and Other Mental Illness (RIN: 2900-AN87) received May 14, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801 (a) (1) (A).

**May 24, 2013:** Communication 01688, a letter from the Assistant Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting proposed legislation, titled "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014."

**May 24, 2013:** Communication 01686, a letter from the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Department of Defense, transmitting additional legislative proposals that the Department requests be enacted during the first session of the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress.

**May 24, 2013:** Communication 01672, a letter from the Director, Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule – Copayments for Medications in 2013 (RIN: 2900-AO58) received May 22, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a) (1) (A).

**June 10, 2013:** Communication 01722, a letter from the Deputy Director of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of General Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule – VA Dental Insurance Program (RIN: 2900-AN99) received May 28, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a) (1) (A).

**June 13, 2013:** Communication 01863, a letter from the Adjutant General, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S., transmitting proceedings of the 113<sup>th</sup> National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in Reno, Nevada, July 21-25, 2012, pursuant to 36 U.S.C. 118 and 44 U.S.C. 1332.

**June 19, 2013:** Communication 01924, a letter from the Deputy Director of Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule – Community Residential Care (RIN: 2900-AO62) received May 28, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a) (1) (A).

**June 28, 2013:** Communication 02179, a letter from the Acting Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting Extremity Trauma and Amputation Center of Excellence Report to Congress for 2012.

**June 28, 2013:** Memorial 0094, Presented by the Speaker, A memorial of the House of Representatives of the State of Maine, relative to the House Joint Resolution No. 1111 requesting that the President and the Congress support the adoption of the Veterans Remembered Flag.

**July 16, 2013:** Communication 02259, a letter from the Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting a letter reporting the FY 2012 expenditures from the Pershing Hall Revolving Fund for projects, activities, and facilities that support the mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

**July 16, 2013:** Communication 02260, a letter from the Acting Under Secretary and Deputy Secretary, Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs, transmitting Veterans Affairs and

Department of Defense Joint Executive Council Fiscal Year 2012 Annual Report, pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 8111(f).

**July 24, 2013:** Communication 02340, a letter from the Director of Regulation Policy and Management Prescribed by Non-VA Providers (RIN: 2900-A077) received July 16, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801 (a) (1) (A).

**August 2, 2103:** Communication 02729, a letter from the Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule – Patient Access to Records (RIN: 2900-A061) received July 26, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801 (a)(1)(A).

**September 9, 2013:** Communication 02769, a letter from the Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting Third Quarterly Report of FY 2013 under the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2008.

**September 9, 2103:** Communication 2770, a letter from the Principal Deputy Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting Second Quarterly Report of FY2013 on the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994.

**September 16, 2013:** Communication 02956, a letter from the Director of Regulation Policy and Management, Offices of the General Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule – VA Veteran Owned Small Business Verification Guidelines (RIN: 2900-A049) received August 22, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801 (a) (1) (A).

**September 16, 2013:** Communication 02955, a letter from the Director of Regulation Policy and Management, Offices of the General Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule – VA Health Professional Scholarship and Visual Impairment and Orientation and Mobility Professional Scholarship Programs (RIN: 2900-AO34/WP2010-041), received August 22, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801 (a) (1) (A).

**September 30, 2013:** Communication 03160, a letter from the Director of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, the Department's final rule – Disease Associated with Exposure to Certain Herbicide Agents: Peripheral Neuropathy (RIN: 2900-AO32) September 12, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801 (a) (1) (A).

**September 30, 2013:** Communication 03161, a letter from the Director, Regulation Policy and Management, Office of General Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, the Department's final rule – Vet Center Services (RIN: 2900-AN92) received September 13, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801 (a) (1) (A).

**October 14, 2013:** Communication 03299, a letter from the Director, Regulation Policy and Management, Office of General Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, the Department's final rule – VA Acquisition Regulation: Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned and Veteran-Owned Small Business Status Protests (RIN: 2900-AM92) received September 26, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801 (a) (1) (A).

**October 16, 2013:** Memorial 0139, a memorial presented as follows by the Speaker: A memorial of the Senate of the State of Texas, relative to Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 17 urging the Congress to restore the presumption of a service connection for Agent Orange exposure to United States Navy and United States Air Force veterans.

**October 28, 2013:** Communication 03416, a letter from the Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, a letter notifying the Congress that the Department will no longer enforce section 101 (3) and 101(31) of title 38.

**October 29, 2013:** Communication 03437, a letter from the Director of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, the



Department's final rule – Eligibility of Disabled Veterans and Members of the armed Forces with Severe Burn Injuries for Financial Assistance in the Purchase of an Automobile or other Conveyance and Adaptive Equipment (RIN: 2900-AO31) received September 19, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801 (a) (1) (A).

**October 30, 2013:** Communication 03616, a letter from the Director of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, the Department's final rule – VA Dental Insurance Program-Federalism (RIN:2900-A085) received October 21, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801 (a) (1) (A).

**November 19, 2013:** Communication 03763, a letter from the Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, a letter regarding the Department's decision to no longer defend section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act.

**November 22, 2013:** Memorial 0163, a memorial presented by the Speaker, a memorial of the General Assembly of the State of California, relative to Assembly Joint Resolution No. 19 urging the Congress and the President to provide benefits to those veterans discriminated against solely on the basis of their sexual orientation.

**December 9, 2013:** Communication 04035, a letter from the Director, Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, the Department's final rule regarding Copayment for Extended Care Services (RIN: 2900-Ao59), received December 2, 2013, pursuant to U.S.C. 801 (a) (1) (A).

**December 9, 2013:** Communication 04036, from the National Adjutant, Chief Executive Officer, the Disabled American Veterans, transmitting the 2013 National Convention Proceedings of the Disabled American Veterans, pursuant to 36 U.S.C. 90i and 44 U.S.C. 1332.

**December 11, 2013:** Communication 04130, a letter from the Director, Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule – Criteria for a Catastrophically Disabled Determination for Purposes of Enrollment (RIN: 2900-A021) received December, 3, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801 (a) (1) (A).

**December 11, 2013:** Communication 04131, from the Director, Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule – Specially Adapted Housing Eligibility for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Beneficiaries (RIN: 2900-A084) received December 3, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801 (a) (1) (A).

**December 11, 2013:** Communication 04132, a letter from the Director, Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule – Grants to States for Construction or Acquisition of State Homes (RIN: 2900-A060) received December 5, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801 (a) (1) (A).