

**STATEMENT OF
ROBERT VAN KEUREN
CHAIR, ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS**

on

H.R. 4248 - Homeless Veterans Assistance Reauthorization Act

**BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
U. S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

May 6, 2004

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to come before you today. I will limit my comments to HR 4248, the Homeless Veterans Assistance Reauthorization Act of 2004.

My name is Robert Van Keuren. I am the Homeless Program Coordinator for VISN 2 for the Department of Veterans Affairs. I currently have the added honor of serving as the Chair of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs' Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans. My interest in assisting veterans who are homeless preceded my employment with VA and included serving as the Executive Director of the Vietnam Veterans of San Diego, Inc. While in that position, I served as the co-founder of the first standdown for homeless veterans, and was one of the founders of the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans.

As you are aware, VA's Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program has added more than 6,400 transitional housing beds in service today and accompanying Per Diem support services have been brought on line since the program's inception in 1992. An expected 10,000 beds will be in service when all authorized beds come on line. It has proven to be a very successful and valuable asset in assisting homeless veterans.

The Advisory Committee supports the proposed increase of the authorization to support this excellent program at the level of \$100,000,000 for FYs '05-'08. Funding at this level will allow for the continued operation and support of the 10,000 transitional beds. The Grant and Per Diem Program has proved to be an effective and cost-efficient mechanism not only to provide transitional housing to homeless veterans, but also as a method to assist faith-based, and other community-based agencies leverage additional resources in support of their efforts to assist veterans.

would like to thank you again for the opportunity to talk with you today about VA's Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem program and how it improves the lives of veterans by providing them high quality housing. welcome the opportunity to respond to any questions.