



*News From The ...*

## COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

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**IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 2, 2012**

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### **Subcommittees Review Certification Process for Veteran-Owned Small Businesses**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**—Today, the Subcommittees on Oversight and Investigations (O&I) and Economic Opportunity (EO) held a joint oversight hearing on the Center for Veterans Enterprise (CVE). The CVE has come under scrutiny from the Committee about the way it conducts its verification and re-verification of veteran-owned small businesses (VOSBs) and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses (SDVOSBs).

Numerous concerns have been raised regarding CVE in the past, including the program's inability to eradicate fraudulent businesses posing as a VOSB or SDVOSB. The problems, however, now extend beyond fraudulent representation and range from efficiency and time needed to approve a VOSB or SDVOSB to the types of documentation required for verification.

O&I Chairman Rep. Bill Johnson condemned the CVE's verification process stating, "As this Committee's own investigations and multiple Government Accountability Office investigations have shown, the ad hoc processes implemented by the CVE to verify and re-verify businesses are not working. The recommendations made by GAO and the VA's Inspector General go unheeded. Regardless of the reasons, the time has come for CVE to take a hard look in the mirror, dig down to the root of the problem, and fix it."

Rep. Marlin Stutzman, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, was equally as critical of current CVE practices. "I want to know how, and equally important, when VA will put in place the systems and policies that will shorten the time to be approved, decrease the level of effort needed to pass muster and finally, create a community of veteran-owned businesses that is reasonably free from unqualified companies," Stutzman said.

"The two Subcommittees have worked throughout this Congress to improve the certification process for VOSBs and SDVOSBs," said Johnson. "We have patiently waited for signs of progress following the installation of a new Executive Director of Small and Veteran Business Programs at VA. While some improvements have been made, unfortunately the goals established nearly a year ago, have yet to be achieved.

Rick Wiedman, representing the Vietnam Veterans of America and VetForce, stated that too often CVE creates an overly challenging process for veterans. "The procedures used by CVE are sometimes questionable. We receive many complaints from veterans who were told that they needed to submit additional documentation without being given a clear explanation of why the information is required or what the statutory or regulatory basis is for these documents," said Weidman.

Members of the Subcommittees reiterated their commitment to helping VA and CVE achieve a successful program that best represents America's VOSBs and SDVOSBs.

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