



News From The ...

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 22, 2012

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Veteran and Military Advocates Testify Before Joint Veterans' Affairs Committee

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Today and yesterday, during joint hearings with members of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees, the Committees heard testimony from numerous veterans' organizations on their legislative priorities for 2012. The organizations represented included the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, the Military Order of the Purple Heart, the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs, the Non-Commissioned Officers Association, the Retired Enlisted Association, the Wounded Warrior Project, Vietnam Veterans of America, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, the Air Force Sergeants Association, the Blinded Veterans Association, AMVETS, Gold Star Wives, the Fleet Reserve Association, the Military Officers Association of America, the Jewish War Veterans, the National Guard Association of the United States, and the American Ex-Prisoners of War.

Representatives from the organizations cited several topics of concern during the hearing, to include the Post-9/11 GI Bill, veteran unemployment rates mental health care for veterans, sequestration, the disability claims backlog, and burial and memorial benefits.

The subject of sequestration was of the greatest concern, with witnesses voicing their approval for the actions taken by both Committees to avoid cuts to veterans' healthcare. John Rowan, National President of the Vietnam Veterans of America, said, "We want to commend and thank you for your efforts on behalf of our nation's veterans. We know you have a difficult job, one that is made even more difficult in this time of fiscal austerity as you wrestle with tough budgetary considerations. We understand and empathize with the pressures that you face. And we want you to know that we fully support [Chairman Miller's bill](#) that would protect the Department of Veterans Affairs, the VA, from any sequestration that might be forced to commence on January 2nd, 2013."

Also, at today's hearing, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, [in a dedication ceremony](#), revealed an empty chair draped with the POW/MIA flag that will permanently sit in the Committee's hearing room to recognize, honor, and remember the more than 83,000 Americans still unaccounted for from wars and conflicts in which the United States has been involved. During the ceremony, the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice Commander Charles Susino of the American Ex-Prisoners of War.

Rep. Jeff Miller, Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, noted the importance of maintaining a strong relationship with the veteran community, stating, "While every one of your organizations has a unique set of legislative priorities, you also share a common goal, one that we on these Committees share with you: providing nothing short of the best for our veterans who have returned home and those who will be returning home in the future."

For more news from the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, please visit:

Veterans.House.Gov

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