



News From The ...

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE October 5, 2011

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Wounded Veterans Find Purpose Through Adaptive Sports

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity received an update on the VA-U.S. Paralympic Adaptive Sports Program. In the past year, the program has funded 72 organizations across the nation, helping disabled veterans overcome their injuries through adaptive sports. Through the program, U.S. Paralympics and VA hope to reach out to an additional 30 organizations in the coming year.

“There was a good reason to direct VA to partner with U.S. Paralympics and that was to use the Olympic spotlight to attract local and national organizations to help our wounded veterans around the country overcome their injuries through adaptive sports,” stated Rep. Marlin Stutzman, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity. “Today, we have thousands of disabled veterans involved in adaptive sports. Clearly the program is a success.”

The Paralympic movement began shortly after World War II to help returning veterans recover from wounds through adaptive sports. More than 14,000 veterans with disabilities have participated in the VA-U.S. Paralympic program since its inception in 2009, with an emphasis on community-based programs.

“Injured military personnel and veterans are the soul of the Paralympic movement. Through this program we see veterans with physical disabilities reengaging in life by either skiing with their buddies or playing in their own backyard with their kids,” stated Charlie Huebner, Chief of U.S. Paralympics, a division of the U.S. Olympic Committee. “As the program expands, we see a veteran population that has lower secondary medical conditions, higher self-esteem, lower stress levels, and high achievement levels in education and employment.”

“I believe the VA-U.S. Paralympic program is the right thing at the right time and this why I have introduced H.R. 2345, which extends this program through 2018 to benefit our returning men and women,” said Stutzman. “We have seen today how the program is fostering cooperation between adaptive sports clubs and programs at the local and national level to the benefit of our wounded veterans. This is an opportunity for us to all show our support for our wounded warriors.”

Throughout the hearing, numerous stories about wounded warriors who have used adaptive sports as part of their recovery were told, including that of Army Ranger Joe Brown, who suffered a Traumatic Brain Injury in Iraq. He used adaptive sports as part of his recovery, and now works with fellow wounded veterans at the Harker Heights Parks and Recreation program near Ft. Hood, Texas.

With more than 200 clubs around the country, wounded veterans can visit findaclub.usparalympics.org to learn more about opportunities in their hometown.

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Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity Chairman @RepStutzman leads hearing to review grant program for @USParalympics and VA to help wounded #vets.

Expanding opps for #woundedwarriors to participate in sports at today's @housevetaffairs hearing. Adaptive sports aid in a #vets recovery.

@USParalympics continues to lead in the rehabilitation of our #woundedwarriors. Learn more about programs in your area: <http://findaclub.usparalympics.org/default.aspx>

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