

SECOND 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 , 2014 Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the
State of the Union and ordered to be printed

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, December 11, 2014

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

DEAR MS. HAAS: Pursuant to clause 1(d) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives for the 113th Congress, I present herewith the annual report on the activity of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs for the 113th Congress, Second Session, including the Committee's review and study of legislation within its jurisdiction, and the oversight activities undertaken by the Committee.

Sincerely,



JEFF MILLER
Chairman

CONTENTS

Jurisdiction
Rules of the Committee
Membership and Organization
Legislative and Oversight Activities
Full Committee Legislative Activities
Full Committee Oversight Activities
Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs.....
Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity
Subcommittee on Health
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
Messages from the President and other Executive Branch
Communications.....

SECOND ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIR FOR THE 113TH CONGRESS

December , 2014, Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union
and ordered to be printed

Mr. MILLER, from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, submitted the following

R E P O R T

Clause 1(d) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives for the 113th Congress requires that each standing committee, not later than January 2 of each year, submit to the House a report on the activities of that committee, including separate sections summarizing the legislative and oversight activities of that committee during that Congress.

JURISDICTION

RULES OF THE HOUSE

Clause 1(s) of rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives for the 113th Congress sets forth 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
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
113TH CONGRESS

Second Session

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.

MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

(Ratio: 14–11)

JEFF MILLER, Florida, *Chairman*

DOUG LAMBORN, Colorado

GUS M. BILIRAKIS, Florida, *Vice Chairman*

DAVID P. ROE, Tennessee

JEFF DENHAM, California

BILL FLORES, Texas

JON RUNYAN, New Jersey

DAN BENISHEK, Michigan

TIM HUELSKAMP, Kansas

MIKE COFFMAN, Colorado

BRAD WENSTRUP, Ohio

PAUL COOK, California

JACKIE WALORSKI, Indiana

DAVID W. JOLLY, Florida*

MICHAEL H. MICHAUD, Maine, *Ranking Member*

CORRINE BROWN, Florida

MARK TAKANO, California

JULIA BROWNLEY, California

DINA TITUS, Nevada

ANN KIRKPATRICK, Arizona

RAUL RUIZ, California

GLORIA NEGRETE-MCLEOD, California

ANN M. KUSTER, New Hampshire

BETO O'ROURKE, Texas

TIMOTHY J. WALZ, Minnesota

Jonathan A. Towers, *Majority Staff Director*

Nancy Dolan, *Minority Staff Director*

* Representative David W. Jolly was added to the Membership of the Full Committee by unanimous consent during a business meeting held on April 3, 2014

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON DISABILITY ASSISTANCE AND MEMORIAL AFFAIRS

(Ratio: 5–4)

JON RUNYAN, New Jersey, *Chairman*

DOUG LAMBORN, Colorado
GUS M. BILIRAKIS, Florida
PAUL COOK, California
DAVID W. JOLLY, Florida*

DINA TITUS, Nevada
BETO O’ROURKE, Texas
RAUL RUIZ, California
GLORIA NEGRETE-MCLEOD, California

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

(Ratio: 5–4)

BILL FLORES, Texas, *Chairman*

JON RUNYAN, New Jersey
MIKE COFFMAN, Colorado
PAUL COOK, California
BRAD WENSTRUP, Ohio

MARK TAKANO, California
JULIA BROWNLEY, California
DINA TITUS, Nevada
ANN KIRKPATRICK, Arizona

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH

(Ratio: 7–5)

DAN BENISHEK, Michigan, *Chairman*

DAVID P. ROE, Tennessee
JEFF DENHAM, California
TIM HUELSKAMP, Kansas
JACKIE WALORSKI, Indiana
BRAD WENSTRUP, Ohio
DAVID W. JOLLY, Florida*

JULIA BROWNLEY, California, *Ranking Member*
CORRINE BROWN, Florida
RAUL RUIZ, California
GLORIA NEGRETE-MCLEOD, California
ANN M. KUSTER, New Hampshire

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

(Ratio: 6–5)

MIKE COFFMAN, Colorado, *Chairman*

DOUG LAMBORN, Colorado
DAVID P. ROE, Tennessee
TIM HUELSKAMP, Kansas
DAN BENISHEK, Michigan
JACKIE WALORSKI, Indiana

ANN KIRKPATRICK, Arizona, *Ranking Member*
MARK TAKANO, California
ANN M. KUSTER, New Hampshire
BETO O’ROURKE, Texas
TIMOTHY J. WALZ, Minnesota

* Representative David W. Jolly was added to the Membership of the Subcommittees on Health and Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs by unanimous consent during a business meeting held on April 3, 2014

COMMITTEE STAFF

MAJORITY STAFF

Jonathan A. Towers
Staff Director

Michael F. Brinck
Deputy Staff Director

Brandt Anderson, *Research Assistant, Subcommittee on Health (Oct. 2014 – Present)*

Kelsey Baron, *Research Assistant, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity*

Curt Cashour, *Communications Director*

Amy Centanni, *Investigative Counsel, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
(Jun. 2014 – Present)*

Jonathan A. Clark, *Staff Director, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity*

Bernadine N. Dotson, *Financial Administrator*

Jessica G. Eggimann, *Chief Clerk, Legislative Coordinator, Office Manager*

Samantha E. Gonzalez, *Professional Staff Member*

Eric E. Hannel, *Staff Director, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations*

Christine Hill, *Staff Director, Subcommittee on Health*

Jon Hodnette, *Investigative Counsel, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations*

Ashfaq Huda, *Detailee – U.S. Government Accountability Office*

Christina Mandruecci, *Staff Assistant (Dec. 15, 2014 – Present)*

Mary Ashley Miller, *Staff Assistant*

Megan Olmstead, *Research Assistant and Counsel, Subcommittee on Health*

(Jan. 2014 – June 2014)

Harold Rees, *Senior Investigative Counsel, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations*

Rory Riley, *Staff Director and Counsel, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial
Affairs (Jan. 2014 – Oct. 2014)*

Lauren Rogan, *Professional Staff Member and Counsel, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance
and Memorial Affairs*

Michael Siegel, *Digital Manager*

Ian D. Smith, *Research Assistant, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs*

Maria Tripplaar, *Staff Director and Counsel, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and
Memorial Affairs (Dec. 2014 – Present)*

Christopher Stowe, *Military Fellow*

MINORITY STAFF

Nancy Dolan
Staff Director

David M. Tucker
Deputy Staff Director and Chief Counsel

Kent Anderson, *Legislative Fellow*

Megan Bland, *Executive Assistant*

Carolyn Blaydes, *Legislative Assistant*

Justin Brown, *Staff Director, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs*

Juan Lara, *Staff Director and Counsel Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity*

(Jan. 2014 – Oct. 2014)

Carol S. Murray, *Office Manager and Legislative Coordinator*

Daniel Rafter, *Communications Director*

Saki Ververis, *Senior Legislative Assistant*

Cathleen C. Wiblemo, *Staff Director, Subcommittee on Health*

LEGISLATIVE AND OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

From January 1, 2013 through December 31, 2014 of the First and Second Sessions of the 113th Congress, 363 bills were referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The Committee reported to the House or was discharged from further consideration of 29 measures. Ten measures regarding matters within the Committee's jurisdiction were enacted into law.

The following is a summary of the legislative and oversight activities of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs from January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014 of the 113th Congress.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

(Ratio: 14–11)

JEFF MILLER, Florida, *Chairman*

DOUG LAMBORN, Colorado

GUS M. BILIRAKIS, Florida, *Vice Chairman*

DAVID P. ROE, Tennessee

JEFF DENHAM, California

BILL FLORES, Texas

JON RUNYAN, New Jersey

DAN BENISHEK, Michigan

TIM HUELSKAMP, Kansas

MIKE COFFMAN, Colorado

BRAD WENSTRUP, Ohio

PAUL COOK, California

JACKIE WALORSKI, Indiana

DAVID W. JOLLY, Florida*

MICHAEL H. MICHAUD, Maine, *Ranking Member*

CORRINE BROWN, Florida

MARK TAKANO, California

JULIA BROWNLEY, California

DINA TITUS, Nevada

ANN KIRKPATRICK, Arizona

RAUL RUIZ, California

GLORIA NEGRETE-MCLEOD, California

ANN M. KUSTER, New Hampshire

BETO O'ROURKE, Texas

TIMOTHY J. WALZ, Minnesota

* Representative David W. Jolly was added to the Membership of the Full Committee by unanimous consent during a business meeting held on April 3, 2014

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
FULL COMMITTEE LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES
Second Session

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EXPIRING AUTHORITIES ACT OF 2014

(H.R. 5404)

Summary

H.R. 5404, the Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2014, would amend certain veterans' health benefit provisions to extend through 2015, would extend through Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 the authority and authorization of appropriations under the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010. The bill would also extend authorities related to homelessness, benefits, and other authorities including the Secretary of Veterans Affairs' authority to transport individuals through 2015. H.R. 5404 would extend the Secretary's authority to maintain a regional office in the Philippines through FY2015, and would extend the requirement that the Secretary report to Congress on the disposition of each case recommended to the Secretary for equitable relief from the denial of VA benefits due to administrative error through 2015. This bill would also extend the authority for the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans through 2015, as well as the Secretary's authority to provide specially adapted housing assistance through FY2015, and the Secretary's authority to enter into an agreement with National Academy of Sciences (NAS), under the Agent Orange Act of 1991, for a study of the associations between diseases and exposure to dioxin and other chemical compounds in herbicides, through 2015.

The bill would also increase the multipliers used in calculating the fees the Secretary is authorized to pay to educational institutions and apprenticeships, would amend provisions for payments under the Education Debt Reduction Program, and would make miscellaneous and technical amendments to the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014.

Legislative History

H.R. 5404 was introduced by Representative Jeff Denham on September 8, 2014, and referred to the Committee on Veterans Affairs, in addition to the Committees on Armed Services, and the Budget. H.R. 5404 was originally cosponsored by Committee Chairman Jeff Miller. The bill had no additional cosponsors.

On September 10, 2014, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs met in open session and ordered the bill favorably reported to the House by voice vote.

On September, 16, 2014, the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 5404 by voice vote.

On September 18, 2014, the Senate passed H.R. 5404 without amendment by Unanimous Consent.

On September 26, 2014, H.R. 5404 was signed by the President and became Public Law No. 113-175.

VA CONSTRUCTION ASSISTANCE ACT OF 2014

(H.R. 3593)

Summary

H.R. 3593, the VA Construction Assistance Act of 2014, would require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, for any construction or alteration project that is a major medical facility project, to use the services of a medical equipment planner as part of the architectural and engineering firm for the project, develop and use a project management plan to ensure clear and consistent communication among all parties, subject the project to construction peer excellence review, develop a metrics program to enable the monitoring of change-order processing time and goals for the change-order process consistent with the best practices of other federal agencies, and use design-build processes to minimize multiple change orders. This bill would direct the Secretary to procure the services of the Army Corps of Engineers with respect to appointing not less than one special project manager who has experience in managing construction projects that exceed \$60 million to oversee such covered projects until completion. H.R. 3593 would require a special project manager to submit to congressional committees detailed plans of a covered project and progress reports, which would include an analysis of all changes ordered by the VA and recommendations for improving the operation of any construction-related activity to reduce costs or complete the project in a timelier manner.

Legislative History

H.R. 3593 was introduced by Representative Mike Coffman on November 21, 2013, and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The bill was originally cosponsored by Representative Ann Kirkpatrick, and had six additional cosponsors.

On March 25, 2014, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a legislative hearing on H.R. 3593, and received testimony from the following witnesses: Ms. Stella S. Fiotes, Executive Director, Office of Construction and Facilities Management, Office of Acquisition, Logistics and Construction, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Gregory Wilshusen, Director, Information Security Issues, U.S. Government Accountability Office; Mr. Raymond Kelley, Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Ms. Diane Zumatto, National Legislative Director, AMVETS; Mr. James H. Binns, Chairman, Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses; Mr. Louis Celli, Legislative Director, The American Legion; Mr. Davy Leghorn, Assistant Director, Veterans Employment and Education Division, The American Legion; and Mr. Frank Wilton, Chief Executive Officer, American Association of Tissue Banks.

On September 10, 2014, the Committee met in open session and ordered the bill favorably reported to the House by voice vote. The Committee Report was filed on September 15, 2014 (H. Rept. 113-586).

On September 16, 2014, the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 3593 by voice vote.

On September 17, 2014, H.R. 3593 was received in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

VETERANS TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY CARE IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2014

(H.R. 4276)

Summary

H.R. 4276, the Veterans Traumatic Brain Injury Care Improvement Act of 2014, would amend the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 to alter the reporting requirements under the pilot program to assess the effectiveness of providing assistance to eligible veterans with traumatic brain injury to enhance their rehabilitation, quality of life, and community integration. This bill would direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) to submit reports to the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs on the pilot program for each quarter occurring between January 1, 2015, and September 30, 2017, and would require each quarterly report, and the final report, to include specific information. H.R. 4276 would also replace references to "assisted living" with the term "community-based brain injury residential rehabilitative care," including rehabilitation services within the meaning of such care.

Legislative History

H.R. 4276 was introduced by Representative Bill Cassidy on March 18, 2014, and was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The bill was originally cosponsored by Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, and had five additional cosponsors.

On September 10, 2014, the Committee met in open session and an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to H.R. 4276 was offered by Representative Dan Benishek, which was adopted by voice vote. The Committee ordered the bill, as amended, favorably reported to the House by voice vote. The Committee Report was filed on September 15, 2014 (H. Rept. 113-598).

On September 14, 2014, the House agreed to a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 4276, as amended, by voice vote.

On September 17, 2014, H.R. 4276 was received in the Senate, read twice, and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

COMPREHENSIVE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY REFORM ACT OF 2014

(H.R. 4399)

Summary

H.R. 4399, the Comprehensive Department of Veterans Affairs Performance Management and Accountability Reform Act of 2014, would specify criteria and process to improve performance appraisal of senior executives at the Department of Veterans Affairs. The bill would also amend criteria and process for performance pay for physicians and dentists, and would require reporting by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. H.R. 4399 would also prohibit performance awards in the Senior Executive Service for each of fiscal years 2014 through 2018.

Legislative History

H.R. 4399 was introduced by Ranking Member Michael H. Michaud on April 4, 2014, and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The bill had sixteen additional cosponsors.

On September 10, 2014, the Committee met in open session and an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to H.R. 4399 was offered by Ranking Member Michael H. Michaud, which was

adopted by voice vote. The Committee ordered the bill, as amended, favorably reported to the House by voice vote.

OUR VETS DESERVE BETTER ACT

(H.R. 4862)

Summary

H.R. 4862, the Our Vets Deserve Better Act, would direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA), within 30 days after enactment, to meet with specified advisory committees to receive administrative and policy recommendations to improve the VA health care system.

Legislative History

H.R. 4862 was introduced by Representative Denny Heck on June 12, 2014, and was referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The bill had no cosponsors.

On September 10, 2014, the Committee met in open session and an Amendment to H.R. 4862 was offered by Representative Dina Titus. The Amendment to H.R. 4862 failed the Committee by a roll call vote of 13 yeas to 12 nays. H.R. 4862 was subsequently removed from the markup agenda at the request of the Chairman with the Unanimous Consent of the Committee.

ASK VETERANS ACT

(H.R. 4971)

Summary

H.R. 4971, the Ask Veterans Act, would require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into a contract with a non-government entity for the purpose of conducting a survey of veteran experiences with medical care of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and would require that the findings be publically available. This bill would also require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish standards for the mental health care of veterans who participated in a sensitive mission or served in a sensitive unit, thus involving classified information. H.R. 4971 would also require the Board of Veterans' Appeals to determine, for purposes of scheduling a Board hearing, the location and format of the hearing, and would give the appellant the right to opt into a different location or format after notice and opportunity to respond.

Legislative History

H.R. 4971 was introduced by Representative Beto O'Rourke on June 25, 2014, and was referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The bill had 32 cosponsors, 11 of which were original cosponsors.

On September 10, 2014, the Committee met in open session and an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to H.R. 4971 was offered by Representative Raul Ruiz, which was adopted by voice vote. The Committee ordered the bill, as amended, favorably reported to the House by voice vote.

On December 3, 2014, the Committee Report was filed (H. Rept. 113-645).

TO AMEND TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE, TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS TO RECOUP CERTAIN BONUSES OR AWARDS PAID TO
EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

(H.R. 5094)

Summary

H.R. 5094, to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to recoup certain bonuses or awards paid to employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, would authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) to issue an order directing a VA employee to repay the amount of an award or bonus paid to the employee if the Secretary determines that such repayment is appropriate, and the employee is afforded notice and an opportunity for a hearing.

Legislative History

H.R. 5094 was introduced by Committee Chairman Jeff Miller on July 14, 2014, and referred to the Committee on Veterans Affairs, in addition to the Committee on Oversight and Government. The bill had two cosponsors.

On September 10, 2014, the Committee met in open session and an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to H.R. 5094 was offered by Committee Chairman Jeff Miller, which was adopted by voice vote. The Committee ordered the bill, as amended, favorably reported to the House by voice vote.

THE VETERANS ACCESS, CHOICE, AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2014

(H.R. 3230)

Summary

H.R. 3230, the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014, was necessitated after extensive investigation of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs exposed inexcusable delays in veterans' health care, hidden wait times, large scale data manipulation, and unconscionable malfeasance on behalf of employees and Senior Executives within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

H.R. 3230 would improve access to care, would require hospital care and medical services be furnished in specific circumstances, and would provide greater transparency and communication with veterans and require reporting by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. This bill would also improve outreach to Indian Health Service medical facilities, and would require additional reporting by VA. H.R. 3230 would direct the Secretary to enter into agreements to reimburse direct care services provided to veterans by the Native Hawaiian health care systems, would extend Project ARCH (Access Received Closer to Home), would direct the Secretary to establish and implement a system to process and pay claims for payment for health care furnished by non-VA health care providers that complies with the Prompt Payment Act, and would require the Comptroller General to report to Congress. This bill would direct the Secretary to enter into one or more contracts with a private sector entity or entities for an independent assessment of the health care furnished in VA medical facilities, and would make several other changes to the provision, supervision, and coordination of veterans' health care, and other health care matters. This bill would also authorize the Secretary to carry out certain major medical facility leases at specified locations for up to specified amounts, and would provide other specific requirements as to leases.

H.R. 3230 would also expand the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship, and make changes to education programs. The bill would extend through FY2024 the current \$90 per month limit on a VA pension paid to veterans residing in nursing homes when their nursing costs are paid through title XIX (Medicaid) of the Social Security Act, would extend the Secretary's authority to collect fees for certain housing loans made, insured, or guaranteed by the VA through FY2024, would limit the aggregate amount of awards and bonuses payable to VA employees in each of FY2015-FY2024, would extend the VA's authority to obtain veterans' income verification information from the Commissioner of Social Security or the Secretary of the Treasury through FY2024, would authorize the Secretary to remove any individual from the VA Senior Executive Service if the Secretary determines that the individual's performance or misconduct warrants such removal, and would authorize the Secretary to remove such individual from the civil service or transfer the individual to a General Schedule position at any appropriate grade for which the individual is qualified, and would further limit the transfer option. The bill would require the Secretary to provide Congress with written notice of each such removal or transfer and the reason for making it within 30 days after the removal or transfer, and would provide limited appeal rights. The bill would require the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) to report to Congress on the actions it plans to take to conduct such expedited reviews. H.R. 3230 would also waive, for 120 days after this Act's enactment, limitations on the initiation of an action to remove an individual from the VA Senior Executive Service.

H.R. 3230 would also authorize appropriations for use by the Secretary to improve veterans' access to care and the VA's physical infrastructure, and would require the Secretary to report to Congress on how the Secretary has obligated such funds. The bill would direct the Secretary to submit a funding plan to Congress describing how the Secretary intends to use such funds.

H.R. 3230 would establish the Veterans Choice Fund in the Treasury, which the Secretary would use to carry out this Act, would provide for limitations and would authorize appropriations. H.R. 3230 would treat funding as emergency funding that is not subject to pay-as-you-go spending constraints.

Legislative History

H.R. 3230 was introduced by Representative Harold Rogers on October 2, 2013, and referred to the Committee on Appropriations. The bill had two cosponsors.

On October 2, 2013 H.R. 3230, Rules Committee Resolution, H. Res. 370, which provided for consideration of H.R. 3230, passed the House. On October 3, 2013, the House considered H.R. 3230 and passed the bill, by a record vote of 265 yeas and 160 nays.

On October 4, 2013, H.R. 3230 was received in the Senate and read the first time, and on October 5, 2013, read the second time.

On June 11, 2014, the Senate struck all after the Enacting Clause and substituted the language of S. 2450.

On June 11, 2014, H.R. 3230 passed in the Senate with an amendment, and an amendment to the title, by a record vote of 93 yeas and 3 nays, and message on Senate action was sent to the House.

On June 18, 2014, Committee Chairman Jeff Miller moved that the House concur in the Senate amendment to the title of H.R. 3230. The motion was agreed to by voice vote. Committee Chairman Jeff Miller then moved that the House insist upon its amendment to the Senate amendment to the text and require a conference. The motion was agreed to by voice vote.

On June 18, 2014, the Speaker appointed conferees for consideration of the House amendment and the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Committee Chairman Jeff Miller; Representative Doug Lamborn; Representative David L. Roe; Representative Bill Flores; Representative Dan Benishek; Representative Mike Coffman; Representative Brad Wenstrup; Representative Jackie Walorski; Committee Ranking Member Michael H. Michaud; Representative Corrine Brown; Representative Mark Takano; Representative Julia Brownley; Representative Ann Kirkpatrick; and Representative Timothy J. Walz.

On June 18, 2014, the Senate disagreed to House amendment to Senate amendment, agreed to request for conference, and appointed conferees to include Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Bernie Sanders; Senator Jay Rockefeller; Senator Patty Murray; Senator Sherrod Brown; Senator Jon Tester; Senator Mark Begich; Senator Richard Blumenthal; Senator Mazie Hirono; Ranking Member Richard Burr; Senator Johnny Isakson; Senator Mike Johanns; Senator John McCain; Senator Tom Coburn; and Senator Marco Rubio.

On July 24, 2014, the Conference was held.

On July 28, 2014, Committee Chairman Jeff Miller filed the Conference Report for H.R. 3230 (H. Rept. 113-564).

On July 30, 2014, the Conference Report was agreed to in the House on a motion to suspend the rules by a recorded vote of 420 yeas to 5 nays.

On July 31, 2014, the Conference Report to H.R. 3230 was agreed to in the Senate by a recorded vote of 91 yeas to 3 nays.

On August 7, 2014, the President signed H.R. 3230, which became Public Law No. 113-146.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

FULL COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

Second Session

SITE VISIT – COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA AND AUGUSTA, GEORGIA

On January 5, 2014, through January 7, 2014, The Honorable Jeff Miller, Chairman, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, accompanied by Committee staff, traveled to Columbia, South Carolina, and Augusta, Georgia, to conduct oversight visits to evaluate the clinical operations of the William Jennings Bryan Dorn Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) in Columbia, South Carolina and the Charlie Norwood Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Augusta, Georgia.

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING - WHAT CAN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT LEARN FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR'S SUCCESSFUL APPROACH TO HIRING VETERANS?

On January 28, 2014, the Committee met to highlight the success the private sector has had in hiring and retaining veterans as employees, and to discuss what impact government programs have had on the success of these veterans and their employment.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Brigadier General Gary M. Profit, USA (Ret.), Senior Director, Military Programs, Walmart; Mr. Sean Kelley, Senior Staffing Director, Cloud and Enterprise Group & Military Recruiting, Microsoft Corporation; Ms. Maureen E. Casey, Managing Director, Military and Veterans Affairs, JPMorgan Chase & Co.; Mr. Jim Amos, Chairman, Tasti D-Lite and Planet Smoothie, on Behalf of the International Franchise Association; and Mr. Ross Cohen, Senior Director, Hiring Our Heroes, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. See "What can the Federal Government Learn from the Private Sector's Successful Approach to Hiring Veterans?," Serial No. 113-50.

SITE VISIT - ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

On February 11, 2014, The Honorable Jeff Miller, Chairman, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, visited Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) to meet with ANC's new Executive Director, Patrick Hallinan, to discuss Mr. Hallinan's transition to becoming the new ANC Executive Director, to tour Section 60, and to review ANC's enforcement of policy regarding items left at gravesites. The Chairman was accompanied by staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs.

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING - JOINT HOUSE AND SENATE VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEES TO RECEIVE LEGISLATIVE PRESENTATION OF THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV)

On February 25, 2014, the Committee participated in a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to receive testimony from Disabled American Veterans (DAV) on the organization's 2014 legislative priorities.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Joseph W. Johnston, National Commander, Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Jim Marszalek, National Service Director; Mr. Joseph A. Violante, National Legislative Director; Mr. Garry J. Augustine, Executive Director, Washington Headquarters; Mr. J. Marc Burgess, National Adjutant; Mr. Barry A. Jesinoski, Executive Director, National Headquarters; Mr. Ron B. Minter, National Director of Voluntary

Service; and Ms. Susan K. Miller, National Commander, Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary. See "Joint House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees to receive Legislative Presentation of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV)," Serial No. 113-53.

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING - JOINT HOUSE AND SENATE VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEES TO RECEIVE LEGISLATIVE PRESENTATION OF VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES (VFW)

On March 5, 2014, the Committee participated in a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to receive testimony from Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) on the organization's 2014 legislative priorities.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Mr. William A. Thien, Commander-in-Chief. Mr. Thien was accompanied by Mr. William Bradshaw, Director, National Veterans Service; Mr. Robert E. Wallace, Executive Director, Washington Office; Mr. Raymond Kelley, Director, National Legislative Service; and Ms. Karen Nigara, Chairman, National Legislative Committee. See "Joint House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees to receive Legislative Presentation of Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)." 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 VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEES TO RECEIVE LEGISLATIVE PRESENTATIONS OF MULTIPLE VETERAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS (VSOS)

On March 6, 2014, the Committee participated in a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to receive testimony from multiple VSOs on the organizations' 2014 legislative priorities.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Col. Peter J. Duffy, USA (Ret.), Director Legislation, National Guard Association of the United States; RADM W. Clyde Marsh, USN (Ret.), President, National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs; Mr. John Rowan, National President, Vietnam Veterans of America; Col. Robert E. Pickard, USA (Ret.), National Commander, Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America; Mr. John Mitchell, National Commander, AMVETS; Mr. Ron Siebels, National Commander, Military Order of the Purple Heart; Mr. Richard "Rick" Delaney, National President, The Retired Enlisted Association; Col. Robert F. Norton, USA (Ret.), Deputy Director, Government Relations, Military Officers Association of America; and Mr. Mark Cornell, National President, Blinded Veterans Association. See "Joint House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees to receive Legislative Presentation of Multiple VSOs," Serial No. 113-56.

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING - JOINT HOUSE AND SENATE VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEES TO RECEIVE LEGISLATIVE PRESENTATIONS OF MULTIPLE VETERAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS (VSOS)

On March 12, 2014, the Committee participated in a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to receive testimony from multiple VSOs on the organizations' 2014 legislative priorities.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Anthony K. Odierno, Board of Directors, Wounded Warrior Project; Mr. Bill Lawson, National President, Paralyzed Veterans of America; SgtMaj. Major H. Gene Overstreet, USMC (Ret.), President, Non Commissioned Officers Association of the United States of America; Mr. Paul Rieckhoff,

Founder and CEO, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; Ms. Jamie H. Tomek, Chair, Government Relations Committee, Gold Star Wives of America; Mr. Virgil P. Courneya, National President, Fleet Reserve Association; Mr. Charles Susino, Jr., Past National Commander, Chairman of the Legislative Committee, American Ex-Prisoners of War; and CMSgt John R. McCauslin, USAF (Ret.), Chief Executive Officer, Air Force Sergeants Association. This hearing was hosted by the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee and therefore does not have a House Serial No.

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING - U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BUDGET REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

On March 13, 2014, the Committee met to discuss the Department of Veterans Affairs' Fiscal Year 2015 budget request to Congress.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by The Honorable Eric K. Shinseki, Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Secretary Shinseki was accompanied by The Honorable Robert A. Petzel, M.D., Under Secretary for Health; The Honorable Allison A. Hickey, Under Secretary for Benefits; The Honorable Steve L. Muro, Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs; Ms. Helen Tierney, Executive in Charge for the Office of Management and Acting Chief Financial Officer; and Mr. Stephen Warren, Executive-in-Charge for Information and Technology, Office of Information and Technology. See "U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2015," Serial No. 113-57.

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING - JOINT HOUSE AND SENATE VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEES TO RECEIVE LEGISLATIVE PRESENTATION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

On March 26, 2014, the Committee participated in a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to receive testimony from The American Legion on the organization's 2014 legislative priorities.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Daniel M. Dellinger, National Commander of the American Legion. Mr. Dellinger was accompanied by Mr. Brett Reistad, Chairman, National Legislative Commission; Mr. Louis Celli, Director, National Legislative Division; Mr. Ralph Bozella, Chairman, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission; Ms. Verna Jones, Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division; Mr. Dale Barnett, Chairman, National Economic Commission; and Mr. Mark Walker, Assistant Director, National Economic Division. 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 II: IS VA RESPONDING TO CONGRESSIONAL REQUESTS IN A TIMELY MANNER?

On April 3, 2014, the Committee met to discuss issues surrounding VA's timely response to requests for information made by the Committee, and to explore the internal process by which the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs works with program officers within VA to meet the Committee's information requests.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by The Honorable Sloan Gibson, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. "See Trials in Transparency II: Is VA Responding to Congressional Requests in a Timely Manner?," Serial No. 113-63.

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING - A CONTINUED ASSESSMENT OF DELAYS IN VA MEDICAL CARE AND PREVENTABLE VETERAN DEATHS

On April 9, 2014, the Committee met to examine serious patient safety incidents at VA medical facilities in Columbia, South Carolina; Augusta, Georgia; Memphis, Tennessee; Miami, Florida; Phoenix, Arizona; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Atlanta, Georgia.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Barry Coates, Veteran; and Mr. Daniel M. Dellinger, National Commander, The American Legion. Mr. Dellinger was accompanied by Mr. Edward Lilly, Senior Filed Service Officer, The American Legion.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Ms. Debra A. Draper, Director, Health Care, U.S. Government Accountability Office; and Dr. John D. Daigh, Jr., M.D., Assistant Inspector General for Healthcare Inspections, Office of the Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by Dr. Thomas Lynch, M.D., Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Clinical Operations, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Dr. Lynch was accompanied by Dr. Carolyn M. Clancy, M.D., Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Quality, Safety, and Value, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See "A Continued Assessment of Delays in VA Medical Care and Preventable Veteran Deaths," Serial No. 113-64.

SITE VISIT – AUGUSTA, MAINE; TOGUS, MAINE

On April 11, 2014, The Honorable Jeff Miller, Chairman, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and The Honorable Michael H. Michaud, Ranking Member, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, traveled to Togus and Augusta, Maine, to conduct oversight of the Togus Regional Office, Togus VA Medical Center, Togus National Cemetery, and the Augusta Maine State Veterans Home. The Chairman and Ranking Member were accompanied by staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs. The purpose of these visits was to conduct oversight of locations that impact veterans' benefits throughout the State of Maine.

SITE VISIT - PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

On April 17, 2014, staff of the Subcommittee on Health, along with the Committee Deputy Staff Director, traveled to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to conduct an oversight visit at the Department of Veterans Affairs National Center on Homelessness Among Veterans (NCHAV), in preparation for a future Committee hearing on VA's multi-billion dollar effort to end homelessness among veterans by 2015. The purpose of this trip was to discuss various issues, including the Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) program, the HUD-VASH program, VA's Homeless Analytics tool, VA's Homeless Registry, the status of VA's five-year initiative to end veteran homelessness, and former and ongoing research studies regarding veteran homelessness.

SITE VISIT – DENVER, COLORADO

On April 22, 2014, The Honorable Jeff Miller, Chairman, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, visited the construction site for the new medical facility for the VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System, for purposes of reviewing progress toward completion. The Chairman also visited the Denver Regional Office and the Fort Logan National Cemetery. The Chairman was accompanied by staff of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

SITE VISIT – BAY PINES, FLORIDA

On April 24, 2014 through April 25, 2014, The Honorable Jeff Miller, Chairman, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, traveled to Bay Pines, Florida to deliver the keynote address at a ceremony renaming the Bay Pines VA Medical Center as the Bill Young Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center. The Chairman was accompanied by staff of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

FULL COMMITTEE ROUNDTABLE – VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATION (VSO) LEADERSHIP

On April 29, 2014, staff of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs coordinated a VSO Roundtable discussion for the Committee. The VSO Roundtable presented an opportunity to highlight proposed legislation and Committee focus areas, and to provide VSOs a forum to interact with Members. Discussion was held on the Committee's oversight priorities of accountability, access to effective health care, and ongoing oversight of the Veterans Benefits Administration. Additionally, the VSO Roundtable provided an opportunity to highlight the Chairman's legislative priorities, including H.R. 813, the Putting Veterans Funding First Act of 2013, H.R. 4031, the Department of Veterans Affairs Management Accountability Act of 2014, and H.R. 357, the GI Bill Tuition Fairness Act of 2013.

Participants included the Air Force Sergeants Association; The American Legion; The American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor; AMVETS; The Association of the U.S. Army; The Association of the U.S. Navy; Blinded Veterans of America; Concerned Veterans for America; Disabled American Veterans; Fisher House; Fleet Reserve Association; Gold Star Wives of America; Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; Jewish War Veterans of America; Military Officers of America Association; Military Order of the Purple Heart; National Association of State Workforce Agencies; National Association of Uniformed Services; National Military Family Association; National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs; National Guard Association of the United States; Non-Commissioned Officers of America; U.S. Paralympics; Paralyzed Veterans of America; The Bob Woodruff Foundation; Reserve Officers Association; The Retired Enlisted Association; Soldier On; Student Veterans of America; Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors; Veterans of Foreign Wars; Vets First; Vietnam Veterans of America; and the Wounded Warrior Project.

FULL COMMITTEE ISSUANCE OF SUBPOENA DUCES TECUM TO SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

On May 8, 2014, the Committee issued a subpoena upon the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, requiring the production of specific documents related to communications involving the Phoenix VA Health Care System that in any way discussed, addressed, or referenced the destruction or deletion of an alternate patient wait list referred to by any name, including but not limited to the "interim list," and sent to or from specifically enumerated individuals.

SITE VISIT - JACKSON AND COLUMBUS, MISSISSIPPI

On May 13, 2014, through May 14, 2014, The Honorable Jeff Miller, Chairman, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, The Honorable Gregg Harper, Member, U.S. House of Representatives, and The Honorable Alan Nunnelee, Member, U.S. House of Representatives, traveled to Jackson and Columbus, Mississippi to conduct oversight and to evaluate the clinical

operations of the G.V. Sonny Montgomery Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, the Jackson Regional Office, and the Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in Columbus, Mississippi. The Chairman was accompanied by staff of the Subcommittee on Health.

FULL COMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETING - U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS' FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH MAY 8, 2014 SUBPOENA

On May 22, 2014, the Committee met to discuss the Department of Veterans Affairs' lack of compliance with a subpoena for documents issued by the Committee on May 8, 2014. Specifically, the purpose of this meeting was to address the VA's continued failure to comply with the subpoena *duces tecum* the Committee issued on May 8, 2014.

At the business meeting, a motion was passed authorizing subpoenas to compel testimony regarding the destruction of an alternate wait list associated with the Phoenix VA Health Care System by Dr. Thomas Lynch, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Clinical Operations, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Joan Mooney, Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Legislative Affairs, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Michael Huff, Congressional Relations Officer, Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The motion was conditional, and authorized the subpoenas only if the witnesses did not voluntarily appear on May 28, 2014.

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING - TO RECEIVE WITNESS TESTIMONY RELATED TO COMMITTEE SUBPOENA

On May 28, 2014, the Committee met to discuss the Department of Veterans Affairs' lack of compliance with the subpoena for documents issued on May 8, 2014.

On the first and only panel, witnesses appeared voluntarily and testimony was provided by Dr. Thomas Lynch, M.D., Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Clinical Operations, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Joan Mooney, Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Legislative Affairs, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Michael Huff, Congressional Relations Officer, Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See "To Receive Witness Testimony Related to Committee Subpoena," Serial No. 113-69.

SITE VISIT – PENSACOLA, FLORIDA

On June 2, 2014, The Honorable Jeff Miller, Chairman, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, visited the Joint Ambulatory Care Center and the Eglin AFB Community Based Outpatient Center for purposes of oversight of operations. The Chairman was accompanied by staff of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING - OVERSIGHT HEARING ON DATA MANIPULATION AND ACCESS TO VA HEALTHCARE: TESTIMONY FROM THE GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE, VA OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL, AND THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

On June 9, 2014, the Committee met to address ongoing issues of systemic manipulation of wait time for appointments that occurs throughout the Veterans Health Administration and the negative impacts on healthcare provided to veterans.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Dr. Debra A. Draper, Ph.D., Director, Health Care, U.S. Government Accountability Office; Mr. Philip Matkovsky, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Administrative Operations, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Richard J. Griffin, Acting Inspector General, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. Griffin was also accompanied by Ms. Linda A. Halliday, Assistant Inspector General for Audits and Evaluations, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See "Oversight Hearing on Data Manipulation and Access to VA Healthcare: Testimony from GAO, IG, and VA," Serial No. 113-72.

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING - AN EXAMINATION OF BUREAUCRATIC BARRIERS TO CARE FOR VETERANS

On June 12, 2014, the Committee met to assess and evaluate administrative barriers at the Department of Veterans Affairs that are impeding quality and efficient access to care for veterans.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Tim S. McClain, President, Humana Government Business; Mr. Dan Collard, Chief Operating Officer, The Studer Group; and Dr. Betsy McCaughey, Ph.D., Chairman, Committee to Reduce Infection Deaths.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Dr. Robert L. Jesse M.D., Ph.D., Acting Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See "An Examination of Bureaucratic Barriers to Care for Veterans," Serial No. 113-73.

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING - NON-VA CARE: AN INTEGRATED SOLUTION FOR VETERAN ACCESS

On June 18, 2014, the Committee met to examine and discuss the Department of Veterans Affairs' use of non-VA care to increase timely access to health care to veterans facing long wait times for appointments at VA facilities.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Mr. David J. McIntyre Jr., President and Chief Executive Officer, TriWest Healthcare Alliance; RADM Thomas Carrato, USPHS (Ret.), President, Health Net Federal Services; and Ms. Kris Doody, RN, Chief Executive Officer, Cary Medical Center, Caribou, Maine.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Randy Williamson, Director, Health Care, U.S. Government Accountability Office; and Mr. Philip Matkovsky, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Administrative Operations, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See "Non-VA Care: An Integrated Solution for Veteran Access," Serial No. 113-74.

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING - REVIEW OF AWARDED BONUSES TO SENIOR EXECUTIVES AT THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

On June 20, 2014, the Committee met to discuss negative incentives that have been created as a result of performance standards, ratings, and awards to senior staff at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by The Honorable Gina Farrissee, Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See "Review of Awarding Bonuses to Senior Executives at the Department of Veterans Affairs," Serial No. 113-75.

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING - EVALUATING THE CAPACITY OF THE VA TO CARE FOR VETERAN PATIENTS

On June 23, 2014, the Committee met to assess and evaluate VA's efforts to address clinical capacity to increase the efficiency of medical facility operations and access to care for veteran patients.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Dr. Thomas Lynch M.D., Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Clinical Operations, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Dr. Lynch was accompanied by Dr. Carolyn M. Clancy M.D., Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Quality, Safety, and Value, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See "Evaluating the Capacity of the VA to Care for Veteran Patients," Serial No. 113-76.

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING - VBA AND VHA INTERACTIONS: ORDERING AND CONDUCTING MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

On June 25, 2014, the Committee held a hearing on the relationship and interactions of the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) in the ordering, and manner of conducting, compensation and pension (C&P) medical examinations for disability benefit purposes. This hearing focused on the relationship between VBA and VHA in the ordering, scheduling, completion, and review of C&P medical examinations used to make disability benefits determinations. Given the recent scheduling manipulation and backlog of care experienced by VHA, this hearing sought information on whether the large number of VHA employees assigned to performing C&P examinations could be better used by being assigned to treatment of veterans.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Thomas Murphy, Director of Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. Murphy was accompanied by Ms. Beth McCoy, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Gerald M. Cross, Chief Officer, Office of Disability and Medical Assessment, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Ms. Patricia D. Murray, Director, Clinical Programs and Administrative Operations, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Testimony on the first panel was also provided by Mr. George C. Turek, Founder, Owner, Chairman, and Chief Executive Officer of Veterans Evaluation Services. A statement for the record was submitted by Jeffrey J. Scarpiello, Director of Business Development for Medical Support Los Angeles. See "VBA and VHA Interactions: Ordering and Conducting Medical Examinations," Serial No. 113-77.

SITE VISIT – ORLANDO, FLORIDA

On July 2, 2014, The Honorable Jeff Miller, Chairman, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, visited the Orlando VA medical center and the community living center on the campus for purposes of oversight of operations. The Chairman was accompanied by staff of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING - VA WHISTLEBLOWERS: EXPOSING INADEQUATE SERVICE PROVIDED TO VETERANS AND ENSURING APPROPRIATE ACCOUNTABILITY

On July 8, 2014, the Committee met to hear testimony from various VA whistleblowers, representatives from the Office of Special Counsel, and the Department of Veterans Affairs, to discuss VA's continued failure to provide adequate protections to whistleblowers.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Dr. Jose Matthews, M.D., Former Chief of Psychiatry, St. Louis VA Health Care System; Dr. Christian Head, M.D., Associate Director, Chief of Staff, Legal and Quality Assurance, Greater Los Angeles VA Health Care System; Dr. Katherine Mitchell, M.D., Medical Director, Iraq and Afghanistan Post-Deployment Center, Phoenix VA Health Care System; and Mr. Scott Davis, Program Specialist at the VA National Health Eligibility Center.

On the second panel, testimony was provided by The Honorable Carolyn Lerner, Special Counsel, U.S. Office of Special Counsel. Ms. Lerner was accompanied by Mr. Eric Bachman, Deputy Special Counsel for Litigation and Legal Affairs, U.S. Office of Special Counsel. Testimony on the second panel was also provided by Dr. James Tuchschiidt, Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Dr. Tuchschiidt was accompanied by Dr. Edward C. Huycke, Deputy Medical Inspector for National Assessment, Office of the Medical Inspector, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. See "VA Whistleblower: Exposing Inadequate Service Provided to Veterans and Ensuring Appropriate Accountability," Serial No. 113-78.

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING - SERVICE SHOULD NOT LEAD TO SUICIDE: ACCESS TO VA'S MENTAL HEALTH CARE

On July 10, 2014, the Committee met to examine whether of VA's mental health and suicide prevention programs are effective in reducing the prevalence of mental health issues and suicide among the veteran population.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Howard Somers and Mrs. Jean Somers, parents of Veteran Daniel Somers, deceased; Mr. Richard Selke and Mrs. Susan Selke, parents of Veteran Clay Hunt, deceased; Ms. Peggy Portwine, mother of Veteran Brian Portwine, deceased; and Sgt. Josh Renschler, USA (Ret.).

On the second panel, testimony was provided by Dr. Maureen McCarthy, M.D., Deputy Chief Patient Care Services Officers, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Dr. McCarthy was accompanied by Dr. Harold Kudler, M.D., Acting Chief Consultant for Mental Health Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. David Carroll, Ph.D., National Mental Health Program Director for Program Integration, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Michael Fisher, Operation Enduring Freedom/Operating Iraqi Freedom Specialist, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the third panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Alex Nicholson, Legislative Director, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; Lt. Gen. Martin R. Steele, USMC (Ret.), Associate Vice President for Veterans Research, Executive Director of Military Partnerships, Co-Chair of the Veterans Reintegration Steering Committee, University of South Florida; Mr. Warren Goldstein, Assistant Director for TBI and PTSD Programs, National Veteran Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, The American Legion; and Dr. Jonathan Sherin, M.D., Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer, Executive Vice President for Military Communities, Volunteers of America.

See “Service Should Not Lead to Suicide: Access to VA’s Mental Health Care,” Serial No. 113-79.

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING - EVALUATION OF THE PROCESS TO ACHIEVE VBA GOALS

On July 14, 2014, the Committee held a hearing to review the Veterans Benefits Administration’s (VBA) continued focus on the 2015 goals for disability benefits claims processing as well as the viability of these targets, which the Secretary established in 2009 at 125 days to complete, and 98 percent claims-based accuracy. The hearing focused upon the planned and ad hoc strategies implemented to meet these performance goals, as well as the opportunities that exist for abuse and deviation from VBA’s mission.

On the first panel, testimony was provided by Ms. Kristen Ruell, Authorization Quality Services Representative, Pension Management Center, Philadelphia Regional Office, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Ronald Robinson, USA (Ret.), Senior Veterans Service Representative, AFGE Local 520, Columbia Regional Office, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Javier Soto, Esquire, Former Rating Veterans Service Representative, Executive Vice President, AFGE Local 1594, St. Petersburg Regional Office, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

On the second 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. Ms. Halliday was accompanied by Mr. Brent Arronte, Director, San Diego Benefits Inspections Division, Office of Audits and Evaluations, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Additionally, the second panel included The Honorable Allison A. Hickey, Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Under Secretary Hickey was accompanied by Ms. Diana Rubens, Director, Philadelphia Regional Office, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Thomas Murphy, Director, Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Testimony on the second panel was also provided by Mr. Daniel Bertoni, Director, Education, Workforce, and Income Security, U.S. Government Accountability Office. See “Evaluation of the Process to Achieve VBA Goals,” Serial No. 113-80.

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING - CREATING EFFICIENCY THROUGH COMPARISON: AN EVALUATION OF PRIVATE SECTOR BEST PRACTICES AND THE VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

On July 16, 2014, the Committee met to discuss and compare the productivity, capacity, and staffing of the Department of Veterans Affairs’ medical facilities with those in the private sector.

On the first and only panel, testimony was provided by Mr. Richard J. Umbdenstock, FACHE, President and Chief Executive Officer, American Hospital Association; Dr. Monte D. Brown, M.D., Vice President for Administration and Secretary, Duke University Health System, Associate Dean of Veterans Affairs, Duke University School of Medicine; Mr. Daniel F. Evans Jr., President and Chief Executive Officer, Fairview Health Services; and Mr. Quinton D. Studer, Founder, Studer Group, Inc. See “Creating Efficiency through Comparison: An Evaluation of Private Sector Best Practices and the VA Health Care System,” Serial No. 113-81.