

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

CHAIRMAN MIKE BOST

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Watching over Electronic Benefits (WEB) Act

Background:

[VA.gov](https://www.va.gov) is the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) primary website that includes dozens of self-service tools allowing veterans to apply for and manage their healthcare and benefits. The website is powered by interfaces with more than a dozen other VA systems that exchange data and process transactions. Over the course of the last year and a half, VA has disclosed a number of glitches in VA.gov and its underlying systems that have impacted over 120,000 veterans and survivors. These glitches included disability compensation claims being rejected, attempts to add or remove dependents not being carried out, and appeals of benefit denials not being recorded. Some of the glitches continued for weeks or even months before being discovered.

Given the number of veterans impacted and the potential consequences to the benefits that they depend on, it is crucial that VA detects and resolves problems in VA.gov much more quickly moving forward. The *VA WEB Act* requires the Secretary to implement a process and technology safeguards to monitor VA.gov and its underlying systems for adverse events, and report any significant adverse events lasting more than 24 hours to Congress. This legislation also requires VA to develop an improved testing strategy for software updates to the website.

The Message:

- Millions of veterans depend on VA.gov to access their healthcare and benefits; they deserve a website they can trust to meet their needs.
- VA.gov is a patchwork of systems with varying levels of maintenance and reliability. The VA WEB Act will ensure the Department has an effective "watchtower" to spot and resolve problems quickly.
- When veterans' benefits are incorrect or delayed, it is unacceptable for technical problems to continue for months or years before being detected and corrected. The VA WEB Act will hold VA accountable to Congress in a timely manner to ensure veterans are made whole as efficiently as possible.