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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

ACTIVITIES REPORT

Submitted in accordance with House Rule XI(1)(D)



DECEMBER 28, 2020.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

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LETTER OF SUBMITTAL

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, December 28, 2020.

Hon. CHERYL L. JOHNSON,
Clerk of the House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM CLERK: Pursuant to House Rule XI, Clause 1(d)(1), of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, I hereby submit to the House a report on the legislative and oversight activities of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs during the 116th Congress.

Sincerely,

MARK TAKANO,
Chairman.

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MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

MARK TAKANO, California, *Chairman*
DAVID P. ROE, M.D., Tennessee, *Ranking Member*
(16–11)[1]

JULIA BROWNLEY, California
KATHLEEN M. RICE, New York
CONOR LAMB, Pennsylvania, *Vice-Chairman*
MIKE LEVIN, California
ANTHONY BRINDISI, New York
MAX ROSE, New York
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JACK BERGMAN, Michigan
JIM BANKS, Indiana
ANDY BARR, Kentucky
DANIEL MEUSER, Pennsylvania
CHIP ROY, Texas
W. GREGORY STEUBE, Florida

RAY KELLEY, *Majority Staff Director*
JON TOWERS, *Minority Staff Director*

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[1] On July 20, 2020, Representative Steve C. Watkins of Kansas resigned his Committee membership, including the Subcommittees on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs and Technology Modernization.

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116TH CONGRESS *2d Session* | HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES | REPORT 116–698

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS ACTIVITIES REPORT

DECEMBER 28, 2020.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. TAKANO, from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, pursuant to House Rule XI(1)(D), submitted the following

R E P O R T

JURISDICTION OF THE COMMITTEE

Rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives establishes the standing Committees of the House and their jurisdiction. Under that Rule, all bills, resolutions, and other matters relating to the subjects within the jurisdiction of any standing Committee shall be referred to such Committee. Clause 1(s) of rule X establishes 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.

OVERSIGHT PLAN

The Committee on Veterans' Affairs delegates oversight and legislative authority to five Subcommittees: Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, Economic Opportunity, Health, Oversight and Investigations, and Technology Modernization. In accordance with Rule X(2)(d), on March 1, 2019, the Committee submitted an oversight plan to guide its work in the 116th Congress. That plan is summarized below.

Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs

Appeals Reform.—The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA) are responsible for reviewing a veteran's appeal when there is disagreement with the decision made by a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Regional Office (RO) on an initial benefits claim. In August of 2017, the Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act was signed into law (P.L. 115–55) in an attempt to reduce the growing number of appeals, reduce the time veterans waited for a decision, and streamline the process. After 18 months of planning and preparation, the Secretary of VA must "certify" that the necessary procedures, regulations, staff, and IT are in place for successful implementation by February 15, 2019. As a first order of business, the Committee will assess whether this timeline has been met and whether impediments exist to a successful and timely roll out of this long-awaited reform. The Committee also intends to continue the pattern of holding status hearings at regular intervals so that VA leadership is held publicly accountable for meeting the goals clearly stated in the statute to provide fairer, more timely, and more accurate appeals decisions for veterans, and for soliciting and incorporating input from Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) in every aspect of this effort. The Committee intends to continue past efforts to ensure that all veteran-facing communications such as decision letters and informational websites use plain—focus-group-tested—English designed to provide veterans with a clear understanding of their rights and the next steps available to them.

VBA Training.—A consistent finding by the VA Office of the Inspector General (IG) across a wide variety of programs is that VBA training is generally ineffective and results in many errors. In the past, VBA's challenge training was poor and did not adequately prepare examiners to process claims. The VBA manual is frequently updated, and employees are not required to undergo new training or open email notifications explaining the changes. The Committee will conduct oversight of the quality of current VBA training and how VBA implements new training. If necessary, it will recommend steps necessary to improve training, so veterans receive the benefits to which they are entitled. VA employees who are evaluated through work credits earned for accuracy and speed—often without adequate training or time to understand process changes—will be asked directly for their recommendations for how to improve the training they receive with the goal of ensuring that the veterans receive full and fair consideration of the evidence in their claims, so decisions are not rushed through with only a cursory look. The Committee will ask VBA to describe ways em-

ployee input is incorporated in the planning and implementation of program training throughout VBA on an ongoing basis.

Military Sexual Trauma.—The VBA reported that it processed approximately 12,000 veterans' claims per year for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) related to military sexual trauma (MST) over the last three years. A number of years ago, VA relaxed the evidentiary requirements and directed claims processors to look for "markers" (i.e., signs, events, or circumstances) that provide some indication that the traumatic event happened. In FY 2017, VBA denied about 5,500 or 46 percent of those claims. A review by the IG determined that nearly half of those were not properly processed in accordance with VBA policy which may have resulted in the denial of benefits to victims of MST who may have been entitled to receive them. Almost immediately after the release of the report, the Under Secretary for Benefits responded by requiring enhanced training for clinicians conducting disability exams for MST-related PTSD claims, all newly-hired claims processors, and Women Veterans Coordinators and MST Coordinators. The Under Secretary also announced his intention to revisit whether separate lanes in only a few ROs should be established so these complicated claims could be processed by specialized employees. The Committee intends to closely monitor all aspects of these and other process changes VA will be using to adjudicate claims for PTSD as a result of MST. The Committee will also provide vigorous oversight of the promised reconsideration of many of the denied claims described in the IG report. The Committee will also consider whether codification of the current evidentiary standard might lead to greater consistency and improved quality for veterans filing MST related claims.

National Cemeteries.—The Committee will continue oversight of the National Cemetery Administration (NCA), Arlington National Cemetery (ANC), and the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), to include each organization's mission, operations, and inquiries into matters of unclaimed remains, access, and the methodology for determining veteran satisfaction. Each of the above organizations provides a hallowed resting place for veterans. VA alone operates over 150 National Cemeteries to provide an honorable resting place for veterans and certain dependents. While customer service surveys continue to give the NCA high marks for the services it provides for veterans and their survivors, the Committee intends to conduct oversight of the relatively new Legacy Program to ensure the curricula and instructional materials produced through NCA contracts with institutions of higher education are following and meeting the goals of the program. The Committee will consider proposals to convert from a federal contract program to a grant program. The Committee will also oversee whether there is a significant backlog in the Pre-Need program designed to provide veterans with the assurance before death of their eligibility for burial benefits. If a significant backlog exists, the Committee will work with the NCA until it is eliminated, ensuring a timely and streamlined funeral process for family members making final arrangements.

Deported Veterans.—VBA has processed roughly one million disability claims a year for the past five years. A subset of these claims is from veterans who live outside of the United States. Vet-

erans living abroad are eligible for the same disability compensation benefits as domestic veterans. VBA primarily relies on a specialized team in a Veterans Service Center to process claims for veterans living abroad, including obtaining and translating medical evidence and examinations for these veterans. On average, VBA takes longer to make a disability determination on claims filed by veterans living abroad, which is not unexpected given the need to translate medical information. However, questions have been raised about whether some veterans living abroad are inappropriately being denied claims or given lower disability ratings. The Committee will assess the outcomes of claims for veterans living abroad and factors that contribute to these outcomes. The Committee will also determine whether the Secretary should conduct a review of deported veterans' claims to determine if claims have been unduly denied because of a misunderstanding of the regulations as they pertain to deportation. The Committee will consider a recommendation that the Secretary establish a full-time position within VA to provide information and support to deported veterans and guide them through the appropriate steps in the benefits process. The liaison would also serve as the point of contact at VA for the Departments of Defense and Justice on deported veteran policy.

Fiduciary Reform.—The Committee will review the performance of the VBA Fiduciary Program. The program is designed to provide financial security to veterans who have been determined unable to manage their VA benefit payments. Fiduciaries are designated by VA and can be a family member, a close friend, or a professional fiduciary. The IG reviewed VA's Fiduciary Program to determine whether VBA finalized proposed incompetency determinations in a timely manner. The IG found delays in final competency determinations completed in the latter part of 2017. These delays can result in incompetent beneficiaries receiving ongoing benefits payments without protection of a VA appointed fiduciary and beneficiaries waiting longer for withheld retroactive benefits. The Committee will review legislation that would better enable VBA to protect and serve veterans in need of fiduciary support, taking particular interest in a proposal that currently requires site inspections be replaced in some cases by phone call reviews.

Contract Physicians.—Some veterans require a VA medical examination as a part of the adjudication of a claim for disability benefits. Unfortunately, there are not enough VA examiners to perform these evaluations in a timely manner, and some veterans experience lengthy delays before VA is able to schedule such examinations. It may be especially difficult for VA to timely schedule these examinations if the veteran needs to see a specialist, such as a cardiologist or orthopedic surgeon. Moreover, veterans who live in rural areas may have to travel many miles to a VA facility in order to see a VA examiner for a disability examination. To provide veterans with more timely examinations, VA has authority to contract with independent physicians to conduct disability examinations. The Committee will look into whether this program is functioning as intended.

Manila Regional Office.—The authorization for the Manila Regional Office expires on September 30, 2019. The Committee will look at whether the Manila Regional Office is providing effective

and efficient services to World War II veterans who reside in the Philippines.

The Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans.—The Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans provides advice to the Secretary on the administration of VA benefits for veterans who are minority group members on the topics of health care, compensation, and other services. The authorization for the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans expires on December 31, 2019. The Committee will conduct oversight to make sure that this program is ensuring that all veterans receive the respect and services to which they are entitled.

VA Debt Collection Activities.—Section 504 of the Veterans Benefits and Transition Act of 2018 mandates that VA work with VSOs to develop a new standard format for notification letters that, in plain language, clearly explain why such alleged debt was created, and the steps the veteran can take to dispute or mitigate the debt. VA is required to notify Congress when the development of such a letter is complete. If such a letter is not complete within 90 days of the date of enactment, VA shall notify Congress and detail the progress of developing the letter and explain why such a letter is not complete. Furthermore, VA shall submit a report to Congress every 30 days thereafter until development of such a letter is complete.

This section would also require the Secretary to develop an option for individuals to choose to receive notice of a debt by electronic means. Those individuals who do not elect to receive electronic notification will receive their letter by standard mail. Sec. 504 would also require the Secretary to coordinate with the Secretary of the Treasury to research the number of veterans who do not receive debt notification letters and provide a report to Congress detailing the steps VA (working with the Treasury) can adopt to reduce the number of notices sent to incorrect addresses and provide a timeline for adopting such options. The report would also include an estimated cost of sending debt collection letters via certified mail and an analysis of the effectiveness of sending notices by certified mail, among other considerations.

Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

Effectiveness of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP).—The Committee continues to be concerned about the effectiveness of the TAP program which is intended to prepare servicemembers for their return to civilian life. The Department of Defense (DoD), VA, and Department of Labor (DoL) jointly manage and provide content to the five-day course that focuses on skills needed to obtain gainful employment as well as an understanding of the benefits that are available to them from VA and DoL. The Committee will conduct an oversight hearing with U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), DoD, VA, and DoL to discuss the recent changes made in the Fiscal Year 2019 National Defense Authorization Act, implementation of those changes, and how TAP can continue to be enhanced for transitioning servicemembers and their families. The Committee will work with the Committees on Armed Services and Education and Labor to address cross-jurisdictional issues to improve the TAP program.

Effectiveness and Outcomes of Education and Training Programs for Returning Veterans.—The Post-9/11 GI bill, which is administered by VA, is the most generous education program for veterans since the original World War II GI Bill. Based on the length of service, the program funds up to full tuition and fees at public institutions of higher learning and about $23,600 per year at private institutions as well as a monthly living stipend based on the housing allowance paid to servicemembers at the rank of E–5 (with dependents) and the zip code of the location where the veteran is taking the majority of their classes. Recent changes to the program have increased the benefit tiers for servicemembers that serve less than three years on active duty, restored benefit eligibility for individuals who attended an institution of higher learning that closed mid-semester, and expanded eligibility for National Guard and Reserve Component servicemembers mobilized under certain orders. The Committee intends to determine how VA is implementing those changes as well as others included in the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017. Furthermore, as avenues for learning and training continue to evolve and modernize, the Committee will examine these new programs and examine the effectiveness of institutions of higher learning in providing quality education to servicemembers, veterans, and survivors. In addition, the Committee will examine outcome measures for users of the Post-9/11 GI Bill, including graduation rates and job placement data, to ensure the effectiveness of taxpayers' investment in veterans' education benefits and identify predatory institutions targeting servicemembers, veterans, and survivors. The Committee will work with the State Approving Agencies to put in place policies that protect student veterans against predatory or deceitful recruiting practices of schools, such as providing misinformation about student outcomes or encouraging veterans to take out unnecessary private student loans.

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program.—VA's VR&E program provides education and training benefits for disabled veterans with barriers to employment. The program will fund all costs related to long and short-term education and training as well as immediate job placement services. VR&E also manages the Independent Living (IL) program designed to enable the most severely injured veterans to live as independently as possible and the Veteran Success on Campus program, which currently stations VA Vocational Rehabilitation staff at institutions of higher learning. The Committee continues to be concerned about counselor caseloads and outcomes of VR&E programs as well as the administration of the self-employment track of the VR&E program, which can often result in high costs. The Committee will conduct oversight over management and overall effectiveness of the VR&E program.

Loan Guaranty Service.—VA's Loan Guaranty Service provides a loan guaranty benefit to eligible veterans and servicemembers, which enables them to purchase a home at a competitive interest rate often without requiring a down payment or private mortgage insurance. This benefit is highly beneficial to veterans, servicemembers, and their families. Therefore, the Committee plans to conduct oversight of the home loan program with a focus on the appraisal process as well as a continued focus on the need

for an increased, or eliminated, cap on the loan limits for a VA-backed loan. The Loan Guaranty Service also administers grants under the Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) program and the Special Housing Adaptation (SHA) program. These grants, provided to eligible veterans with permanent and total service-connected disabilities, enables the veteran to adapt their home or construct a new home that allows them to live in a home that is not obstructive to them due to their disabilities. These grants are beneficial for the most severely injured veterans, and the Committee intends to evaluate the overall grant amounts and what is needed to adapt a home. The Committee will also examine whether VA can better interact with and track the contractors that veterans use to make adaptations to their homes. There is also a smaller grant under the SAH program, the SAH Assistive Technology (SAHAT) grant program, which is authorized to award grants up to $200,000 per fiscal year per grantee to make certain technical adaptations to the veteran's home, such as voice recognition operations and adaptive feeding equipment. SAHAT is authorized $1 million and the authorization expires on September 30, 2020. The Committee will examine the SAHAT program and how it is administered.

Adaptive Sports Program.—This program is administered by VA, which provides grants to qualifying organizations that provide adaptive sports activities and opportunities at the local, regional and national levels, including Paralympic activities, to disabled veterans and servicemembers. This program is authorized $8 million. The authorization for the Adaptive Sports Program expires on September 30, 2020. The Committee will continue to examine how VA awards grants under this program and the organizations who are receiving funding, as well as how VA is working with local communities and the Paralympic community to promote and enhance adaptive sports programs for disabled veterans and servicemembers.

Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU).—VA's OSDBU is responsible for vetting the applications of veteran and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses wanting to participate in the program designed to increase the amount of procurement dollars spent with veteran and disabled veteran-owned small businesses. The Committee will review OSDBU's performance and coordinate with the Small Business Committee to determine appropriate alternatives.

Licensing and Credentialing Issues.—DoD spends billions of tax dollars to provide servicemembers with the skills needed to complete DoD's mission. The vast majority of those skills translate well to civilian jobs. Unfortunately, not all states and institutions of higher learning recognize and give credit for military training to qualify for state-licensed positions; therefore, the training provided by DoD is essentially wasted. The Committee will review efforts by states and other entities to provide appropriate licenses and credentials to qualified veterans whose military training make them eligible for such credentials or licenses, as well as the progress that states are making to make certain licenses and credentials transferable across state lines.

Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program (HVRP).—HVRP is a program administered by DoL's Veteran Employment and Training Service (VETS), which provides grants to state and local workforce

investment boards, local public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and tribal governments, including faith-based and community organizations. The organizations that compete and receive these grants provide homeless veterans with occupational, classroom and on-the-job training as well as job search and placement assistance. The authorization for HVRP expires on September 30, 2020. The Committee will examine the organizations that are receiving these grants as well as conduct oversight of VETS awarding of these grants, and how the program can be enhanced at the federal and state levels to place more homeless veterans in careers. The Committee will also work with the Committee on Education and Labor to examine how HVRP harmonizes with other areas of DoL.

Performance of the VETS State Grant program including performance of the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist/ Local Veterans Employment Representative (DVOPS and LVERs) use of Employment Outcome Measures.—The DVOPS/LVER program is administered by DoL VETS and funds state employment service staff dedicated to placing veterans in good-paying jobs. There are significant issues surrounding the inconsistent performance of this program across the states and the outcome measures used to determine performance continue to be inadequate. The Committee will continue to review this program and the performance outcomes of DVOPS and LVERs as well as conduct oversight of the National Veterans' Training Institute (NVTI), which trains DVOPS and LVERs on job placement and training skills for veterans.

Homeless Veterans.—The Committee will thoroughly examine the actions VA has taken to reduce veteran homelessness by providing homeless and at-risk veterans with appropriate housing and supportive services. The Committee will examine the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) and Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) programs and will work to ensure that the progress VA has made in lessening the number of veterans who are homeless continues to be successful and sustainable and VA efforts address the myriad factors that underlie veteran homelessness, rather than just increased housing opportunities. The Committee will also continue to oversee VA's integration efforts to support vulnerable veterans by facilitating access to benefits, care, and services.

Subcommittee on Health

Implementation of VA's Community Care Networks.—The Committee will work with VA to ensure the development of Community Care Networks align with congressional intent behind passage of the VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks (MISSION) Act of 2018. The MISSION Act is intended to reform delivery of VA community care and expand the Caregiver Support Program to include veterans of all eras. It is estimated to cost roughly $47 billion over five years by the Congressional Budget Office. As part of the Committee's work, it will consider responsible funding mechanisms which failed to be included in the MISSION Act. This would prevent VA from being forced to cut funding to other VA programs—including healthcare provided in VA facilities—to pay for more expensive, lower quality, and less culturally competent services available in the private sec-

tor. Multiple studies have found that VA delivers a higher quality of healthcare than its private sector counterparts. The Committee will consider actions to preserve and continually improve veterans' access to high-quality, VA healthcare. Additionally, the Committee will work more closely with VSOs to ensure VA's Community Care Networks operate according to the desires of the nation's approximately 20 million veterans.

Health Equity.—The Committee will consider measures to ensure all eligible veterans, regardless of social or physical disparities, are allowed the opportunity to participate in the nation's most advanced, qualified, and culturally competent healthcare system designed to serve them: the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). According to multiple authorities such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, health inequities can result in lower life expectancy, lower quality of life, higher rates of disease, disability, death, and other adverse health outcomes. The Committee is committed to ensuring all veterans are allowed the opportunity to access physicians and treatments in environments that are welcoming and safe, regardless of social determinants of health.

Mental Health and Suicide Prevention.—The Committee will continue to closely monitor VA's mental health and suicide prevention efforts. In 2018, VA was found to have misrepresented the number of veterans included in its annual suicide data report as it apparently included both active duty service members and never-before activated national guardsmen and women. Additionally, the GAO found that in 2018, VA's suicide prevention outreach activities declined significantly after four consecutive years of increases. Due to the critical nature of this issue, the Committee is committed to continuing oversight of VA's current suicide prevention activities and supporting VA's Innovative research in this area, such as the development of the Recovery Engagement and Coordination for Health—Veterans Enhanced Treatment (REACHVET) technology created in conjunction with the National Institutes of Health.

Pain and Medication Management and Complementary and Integrative Health.—The Committee will continue to examine the increased use of prescription medications to treat veterans experiencing acute and chronic pain. Effective pain management is a critical issue for the veteran population as data suggests veterans are a particularly high-risk population for prescription misuse, substance use disorder, accidental overdose, accidents, and/or self-inflicted injury. Recent studies have shown that veterans with the highest-risk conditions are also the most likely to receive the highest-dose, highest-risk opioid therapies. By working with the medical community and veterans, the Committee will pursue reasonable alternatives to opioid usage that promote healing, reduce negative side effects associated with opioid usage, and allow veterans to understand and determine the best method of pain management that works for them. Additionally, the Committee will encourage access to integrative healthcare to ensure veterans' treatment options are not limited to pharmacological interventions.

Expansion of the Program for Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers.—As part of the MISSION Act, Congress authorized, but did not fund, an expansion of the Program for Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers ("Caregiver Program") so that family caregivers for veterans of all eras could access the

increased support formerly available only to veterans who served after September 11, 2001. The Committee will consider measures to ensure implementation and expansion of the Caregiver Program aligns with congressional intent that current eligibility requirements be preserved and expanded to all eras. The Committee will also oversee the implementation of the IT system for the Caregiver Program which was originally mandated as part of the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 and again mandated as part of the VA MISSION Act of 2018. The Committee will consider measures to increase both Congressional support for the program and accountability measures related to implementation and expansion of the Caregiver Program.

Anywhere to Anywhere Telehealth Services.—The Committee will consider measures to support and advance VA's 2018 'Anywhere to Anywhere' initiative. The initiative is an effort by VA to expand access to healthcare through Remote technologies such as Real-Time and Store-and-Forward Telehealth, as well as services that allow veterans to access telehealth technologies from their homes. As part of the Committee's work, it will focus on the accessibility and usability of these services by both rural providers and veteran-patients.

Long-Term Support and Services.—The Committee will assess VA's broad array of Long-Term Support and Services (LTSS) to ensure eligible veterans have access to the most up-to-date methods of care delivery. It is projected that by 2030, one in five Americans will be a senior citizen. VA's VetPop 2016 Projection Model indicates that while the entire veteran population is expected to decrease from 20 million in 2017 to 13.6 million in 2037, the baby boomer generation (born 1946–1964), will continue to be a substantial percentage of the total population. Within VA, LTSS refers to both home and community-based services (HCBS) as well as institution-based services. While VA has developed a network of institution-based services consisting of VA Community Living Centers, State Veterans Homes, and contracted nursing homes, VA must now work to develop a network of HCBS. The Committee will consider measures that promote a balance of institutional and non-institutional based services able to support the growing aging veteran population.

Healthcare for Homeless Veterans.—The Committee will continue to combat veteran homelessness by considering measures that increase homeless and at-risk veterans' access to healthcare and services provided by both VA and its community partners. As part of this work, the Committee looks to empower and support each Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISN) Homeless Coordinator to conduct aggressive outreach and develop strong community partnerships within each VISN's catchment area.

VA Research.—The Committee will oversee VA's medical and prosthetic research program to identify and eliminate redundancies and ensure the dissemination of best practices and a focus on veteran-centric research. VA's Office of Research and Development was established in 1925 to fulfill VA's mission to "to discover knowledge and create innovations that advance healthcare for veterans and the Nation." The Committee intends to promote this goal by supporting research into the areas most likely to enhance the quality and delivery of healthcare to veterans, such as the effects

of hazardous exposures on veterans and their families and efficacy of medicinal cannabis to treat medical conditions specific and non-specific to the veteran population.

Enhanced Efficiency through Predictability.—Although the Committee understands that some programs, during their infancy, should not be made permanent, many temporarily authorized VA programs have proven essential to improving veterans' health and should be made permanent. Permanent authority for programs such as the Child Care Pilot Program and Transportation Grants for Veteran Service Organization (both expected to expire September 30, 2019) would likely increase veterans' confidence that these services will be available as needed and would also increase the efficiency of these programs by allowing for long term planning and permanent funding. The Committee plans to assess temporary programs and determine whether they should be made permanent.

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

VA Inspector General (IG) Budget and Performance.—The Committee will review the budget of the IG and review how VA uses the recommendations of the IG to increase efficiency and effectiveness in providing services to veterans. The Committee will also examine the IG's current resources versus workload to confirm that the IG has the resources to investigate hotline complaints, congressional requests, and conduct routine inspections and audits. The Committee will also closely monitor whether the IG is granted access to VA documents, information, and employees when requested and act to ensure the IG has the access and authority to conduct its investigations, inspections, and audits.

Improper Influence by Non-Government Actors and Government Transparency.—The Committee will investigate instances of non-government actors attempting to improperly influence the execution of VA's mission. It will also examine VA's adherence to federal laws preventing corruption, political influence, private entities' improper influence on the VA, and government transparency, including the Federal Advisory Committee Act, the Hatch Act, and the Freedom of Information Act.

Whistleblowers.—Whistleblowers continue to be a vital source of accurate and timely information. Protecting an employee's legal right to communicate with Congress and report to the IG alleged violations of laws, rules or regulations, waste, abuse, mismanagement, and safety issues is essential for investigations and effective oversight of the executive branch. Despite passage of the Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017 (Accountability Act), the Office of Special Counsel (OSC) reports that over 40 percent of its whistleblower retaliation complaints originate from VA, and the Committee has observed an increase in the number of whistleblower complaints to Congress. The Committee will examine the implementation of the Accountability Act, including the implementation and operations of the Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection, and its effectiveness at assisting whistleblowers and investigating complaints.

Mental Health and Suicide Prevention.—The Committee will continue to closely monitor VA's mental health and suicide prevention efforts. In December 2018, GAO found that VHA suicide prevention outreach declined significantly since 2016 due to lack of leadership

and significant turnover. Of the $6.2 million obligated for suicide prevention paid media, VHA had spent only $57,000 of its paid media budget as of September 2018. Furthermore, a September 2018 IG report found that a veteran who committed suicide in the parking lot of a VA medical facility had not received coordination of treatment during discharge, including adequate documentation of access to firearms. As veteran suicides in VA medical facility parking lots increase, the Committee will examine VA's top clinical priority and its efforts to provide mental and behavioral health treatment to veterans in crisis, including VA's decision to stop publishing the statistic that 20 veterans and military servicemembers commit suicide every day, stalled implementation of the President's January 2018 Executive Order, "Supporting our Veterans During their Transition from Uniformed Service to Civilian Life," and VA's failure to effectively notify veterans of the mental health services it offers.

Government Accountability Office High Risk List (HRL).—VHA has been on the HRL since 2015. The five areas of concern GAO identified when it decided to place VHA on the HRL are: (1) ambiguous policies and inconsistent processes, (2) inadequate oversight and accountability, (3) information technology (IT) challenges, (4) inadequate training for VA staff, and (5) unclear resource needs and allocation priorities. According to GAO, VHA has not made demonstrable progress towards removal from the HRL. GAO has five criteria for removal: (1) leadership commitment, (2) capacity, (3) action plan, (4) monitoring, and (5) demonstrated progress. The Committee is concerned that root causes have yet to be identified and appropriately analyzed, plans to remove VHA from the HRL have not been sufficiently developed, and actions have not been taken according to plans. VHA has been without an Under Secretary for Health since January 2017, demonstrating a lack of senior leadership commitment towards VHA's removal.

VA's Acquisition Process.—VA continues to spend more than $20 billion annually for the procurement of pharmaceuticals, medical and surgical supplies, prosthetic devices, information technology, construction, and services. VA faces significant organizational and workforce challenges, which prevents it from implementing a more efficient, effective, and coordinated acquisition function. The Committee will continue to scrutinize and pursue possible legislative remedies to address VA's procurement practices and functions that place the program at risk. These practices include: lack of inventory controls at VA medical centers, over-reliance on and misuse of purchase cards, failure to include clinicians and end-users in the procurement process, failure to notify and train the VA contracting workforce on changes to policies, directives, and regulations, and failure to comply with the Veterans First Contracting Program.

Prescription of Opioids and Treatment for Pain.—The Committee will scrutinize VA's medication prescription program, its opioid safety initiative, substance abuse treatment programs, and access to alternative chronic and acute pain treatments. The Committee will continue to monitor access to medication assisted treatment at VA medical facilities, adherence to the opioid safety initiative and best practices for reducing the prescription of opioids, training of clinicians on safe prescribing practices, and VHA participation in states' prescription drug monitoring programs. It will also continue

its oversight work to prevent drug diversion within VHA facilities including the review of VHA's policies for tracking and managing controlled substances, and compliance with inspection requirements.

VHA Police.—The Committee will conduct oversight of police at VHA facilities. In 2018, the IG found that governance of the VA police program at VA medical facilities was inadequate. VA lacks central oversight of VA police programs at medical facilities and mechanisms to prevent or address civil rights violations, abuse, or misconduct caused by VA police. The IG also found significant understaffing and inadequate staffing models at VA medical facilities. The Dr. Chris Kirkpatrick Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017 also mandated a GAO study on staffing accountability, reporting and chain of command structure of VA police at VA medical centers that is expected to be published this Congress. The Committee will determine whether legislative remedies are needed to bring greater accountability to the VA police force, prevent real or perceived conflicts of interest, and provide avenues of redress for those whose rights have been violated by VA police.

Sexual Harassment at VA.—According to a 2018 Merit Systems Protection Board study on sexual harassment in the federal workforce, VA had the second highest rate of employees experiencing sexual harassment in the federal government. However, no significant actions have been taken by VA leaders to address sexual harassment. The Committee will conduct fact finding to examine the high rate of sexual harassment in the VA, develop solutions to prevent and address sexual harassment, facilitate an environment in which victims feel comfortable reporting sexual harassment, empower employees and supervisors to intervene when sexual harassment is witnessed or reported, and hold VA leaders accountable for non-action.

VA Administration, VA Employee Adverse Actions, and Federal Labor Protections.—The Committee will continue its oversight of disciplinary actions taken against VA employees, including the disproportionate removal of lower level VA employees in comparison to supervisors and senior VA employees. The Committee will also review whether VA employees subject to adverse actions receive due process—including access to representation. The Committee will examine whether the Accountability Act has been implemented according to congressional intent and whether it has achieved its desired outcome to address poor employee performance and discipline employees for misconduct, clean up toxic work environments that exist within VA, and hold leaders accountable for non-action or contributing to toxic work environments.

Chronic Understaffing.—According to figures released in February 2019, VA currently has 48,985 staff vacancies throughout the Department. Almost 43,000 of those vacancies are in VHA. The Committee will examine VA's efforts to hire employees to address access to healthcare at VA facilities and process benefits claims and appeals. It will also examine high attrition rates and lack of training for human resources employees and recruitment, hiring, and onboarding processes for VA employees. Finally, the Committee will also review rates of pay and other recruitment and retention incentives and programs.

Office of the Medical Inspector.—Questionable findings released by the VA Office of the Medical Inspector (OMI) in three separate congressionally-requested reviews or investigations require the Committee to examine the OMI's processes and methods for conducting reviews and inspections at VA medical facilities. The Committee will also examine whether the OMI is resourced appropriately due to significant demands placed on the office from the OSC, IG, and VHA.

Next Generation–Medical Surgical Prime Vendor Program (NG–MSPV).—NG–MSPV is the largest procurement program in VA. It is an effort to develop a medical-surgical product formulary for use by VHA clinicians and achieve major cost savings by buying in bulk. This program has been hampered by a lack of leadership, resources, clinician involvement, outdated IT systems, and an inability to award the necessary contracts in a timely fashion. The Committee will continue examining VA's implementation effort, including VA's failure to follow the Veterans First Contracting Program during development of the formulary, and other significant challenges faced by the VA contracting organization.

Construction.—The Committee will closely monitor remaining construction projects designed or commenced before the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) involvement through completion. The Committee will also monitor the relationship between the VA and USACE to ensure cooperation and coordination between the agencies and improve VA's activation of newly built hospitals.

Leasing.—Leasing land and buildings for new VHA facilities is fraught with delays and challenges. Leasing is carried out through a complicated interplay of the VA Central Office, the Government Services Administration, local offices, and real estate broker contractors. Jurisdictional battles within VA, poor management of broker contracts, and previous delays in congressional authorization have contributed to inefficiencies and delays in the system. The Committee will work to uncover the root causes of these problems.

Payment of Community Providers.—VA continues to struggle with its failure to promptly pay community providers. This is caused in part by a failure to implement updates to its software, reliance on dozens of decentralized claims processing centers, and inefficient manual adjudication processes. The Committee will continue to evaluate the root causes of VA's payment deficiencies and consider remedial actions to improve efficiency.

Improper and Overpayments for Care in the Community.—In 2017 and 2018, IG audits determined that VA was overcharged $140 million from November 2014 to March 2017 by third party community care contract administrators. These third-party administrators are under civil and criminal investigation for excessive, duplicative, or improper claims, and wire fraud and misused government funds. The Committee will conduct fact-finding into whether VA was overcharged and oversee VA's efforts to recoup any improperly paid claims.

Unauthorized or Expiring Authorities.—The Committee will conduct oversight regarding unauthorized appropriations and expiring authorizations under the Committee's jurisdiction to identify those in need of authorization.

Subcommittee on Technology Modernization

Electronic Health Record Modernization (EHRM).—The VA signed a contract in May 2018 to procure the Cerner Millennium EHR system. The implementation is expected to take at least ten years, cost over $16 billion, and be interoperable with the Department of Defense (DoD) MHS Genesis system and community providers' systems. The initial implementation of the system is scheduled for March 2020 in VISN 20 (Washington State). The Committee will monitor all aspects of implementation of the EHRM, including governance and accountability, cost, schedule, clinical impact, testing and evaluation, and interoperability, among other areas.

Veterans Health Information System Technology Architecture (VistA) Sustainment.—Because EHRM is expected to take over a decade to implement, the VA will need to sustain the existing VistA system at a projected cost of nearly $20 billion over ten years. Future implementation sites will need a functioning VistA system throughout the implementation period. The VA is expected to develop a sustainment plan but has not yet done so and is continuing to implement changes (or "builds") to VistA as needed. The Committee will monitor efforts to create the sustainment plan and review how the VA manages VistA during EHRM implementation.

Financial Management System Modernization.—The VA continues to move forward with the Financial Management Business Transformation (FMBT) project, although significant work remains to be done. The project will replace a 30-year-old COBOL-based system and is estimated to cost $2.3 billion over ten years. The Committee will monitor the program as it moves through the analysis and requirements development phase and will review the VA's acquisition plans.

Enterprise Investments.—VA IT has been on GAO's HRL since 2015, and modernization plans are currently in development as part of VA's effort to be removed from the list. The Committee will evaluate the final modernization plans to assess how they address GAO's concerns, as well as gauge whether VA's modernization efforts address enterprise-wide technology deficits instead of leading to further siloing of investments.

IT Workforce Investments.—VA has lost internal capacity to develop and manage its technology portfolio and has become heavily reliant on contractor support. VA officials have plans to staff up program offices to address some of this deficit, but it is not clear that there is a comprehensive workforce plan or whether future budget submissions will address this shortfall. The Committee will monitor VA's efforts to rebuild its technology expertise and assess whether workforce staffing plans will meet technology implementation needs and modernization plans.

Scheduling System Acquisition.—In January 2019, VA announced a decision to not move forward with its scheduling system pilot—described as very successful—and will instead acquire a Cerner scheduling system that will be implemented over a two-year period. VA officials have provided little information about the decision and how it will impact EHRM implementation. The Committee will assess VA's decision-making process on the pilot project and will assess its implementation across the enterprise and its impacts on the EHRM program.

Cybersecurity, Data Management, and Privacy.—The acquisition of new IT systems by VA will prompt many questions about cybersecurity and data management. In addition, the implementation of EHRM will have implications for the protection of veteran health information and will need further assessment for cyber risks due to the interoperable environment for the system. VA has yet to deliver a cybersecurity strategy for EHRM to the Committee. The Committee will monitor and review the development of strategies and governance plans related to cybersecurity. The Committee will also assess how modernization efforts comply with other statutory requirements, such as the annual Federal Information Security Modernization Act (FISMA) audit.

Healthcare Innovation through Technology Modernization.—VA has often led in healthcare innovation and the modernization projects present opportunities to engage in more innovation. The Committee will assess how innovation is being built into technology acquisitions and whether it is being executed in meaningful ways across the VA enterprise.

Minority Views

ADDITIONAL VIEWS

Rule X of the House of Representatives for the 116th Congress no longer requires committees to adopt oversight plans in an open meeting. Rule X now requires the Chairman, in consultation with the ranking member, to prepare an oversight plan; circulate the plan among committee members for at least seven days before filing the plan; and gives members the right to submit additional views. What follows are additional views for the Committee's proposed oversight plan for the 116th Congress.

The Committee's oversight activities must prioritize oversight of the department's implementation of transformational programs enacted during the 115th Congress. Specifically, during the 115th Congress, Congress passed, and the president signed into law, several major pieces of legislation to improve the benefits and services provided to veterans and their families. This legislation included: the VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017, the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017, the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017, and the VA MISSION Act of 2018. Additionally, in May 2018 the department embarked on a 10-year and $16.1 billion program to modernize its electronic health record. Although I largely support the majority's proposed oversight plan, I offer the following suggestions to improve the plan.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON DISABILITY ASSISTANCE AND MEMORIAL AFFAIRS

VBA Quality Review.—VA employs a variety of mechanisms to review the quality of initial claims decisions. For example, one of VBA's main tools to review the accuracy of claim decisions is the Systematic Technical Accuracy Review (STAR) checklist. The checklist has a very restrictive category of what constitutes an "error," and a more expansive category of what would be considered a "comment," which is why VA claims a 98 percent accuracy rating despite many complaints by veterans and Congress as to the qual-

ity of decisions. Moreover, by allowing quality reviewers to simply comment on many errors, VA can sidestep actually holding employees accountable for inaccuracies. Additionally, recent VA Office of Inspector General (OIG) reports on reevaluations, intent to files, and post-traumatic stress disorder claims based on military sexual trauma found that VA's quality control procedures did not identify that employees were making systematic errors and, therefore, VA failed to develop and update training and guidance to prevent these errors in the future. The Committee should investigate how VBA has designed its quality review measures, to what extent that design yields accurate results, and whether VA's quality controls are sufficient to locate deficiencies in training and guidance.

Toxic and Environmental Exposures Benefits.—Veterans have raised questions about the negative effects that in-service toxic and environmental exposures, such as mustard gas/lewisite, herbicides, and burn pits may have had on certain health outcomes. To address some of the concerns, VA has been contracting with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (formerly the Institute of Medicine), a non-governmental organization, to scientifically review evidence on the long-term health effects of toxic and environmental exposures. The Committee should review VA's responses to these reports to ensure that veterans who were exposed to toxic and environmental exposures receive all the benefits they have earned, and whether there are opportunities for VA and DOD to conduct additional research to help address whether these exposures are causing disabilities in veterans that should be subject to VA compensation.

VA Compliance with Brady Act Reporting Requirements.—Under the Brady Act, VA is required to report the names of veterans and beneficiaries who it adjudicates as in need of a fiduciary to manage their finances. The Committee should investigate the department's compliance with this reporting requirement and the impact that proposed changes to the Brady Act will have on veterans' Second Amendment rights.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Effectiveness of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP)—I share the majority's interest in TAP. In its review of the TAP program, however, the Committee should also work with the Committee on Small Business to review the "Boots to Business" track of the TAP program that provides transitioning servicemembers training on entrepreneurship. The Committee should examine ways to connect transitioning servicemembers to community-based organizations that can assist them in accessing training and services in the community where they transitioning to after service. The Committee should also examine how to help create and implement meaningful and statistically valid outcome measures to validate whether TAP is meeting the needs of transitioning servicemembers.

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E)—I share the majority's interest in VR&E. The Committee should also examine VA's efforts to modernize the IT systems for administering the VR&E benefit. Last Congress, the Committee uncovered that VA had paid over $12 million to a third party contractor to create a new case management system to help VR&E counselors track par-

ticipants. This system was poorly designed and VA ultimately determined that the system was unsalvageable. Now VA has decided to purchase a commercial off the shelf system along with other IT upgrades to meet the original requirements of the case management system. The Committee should continue to closely monitor VA's effort and ensure that no additional money is wasted on updating this critical system for administering VR&E benefits. The Committee should also continue to monitor the implementation of the VR&E longitudinal study and look for ways to better quantify VR&E outcomes.

VBA IT Infrastructure—In addition to the aforementioned issues with the VR&E case management system, the Committee should continue to be concerned with VBA's aging IT infrastructure. The age and performance of the myriad systems that are required to process a Post 9/11 GI Bill claim warrants further attention as well as VBA's efforts to retire and modernize these systems. In addition, the Committee should continue its oversight of VA's creation of an IT system to implement sections 107 and 501 of the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017.

Home Loan Limits—The Committee should investigate whether the statutory conforming loan for the VA Home Loan Guaranty Program is limiting qualified participants' ability to use this benefit.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Mental Health and Suicide Prevention.—I share the majority's interest in mental health and suicide prevention. The Committee also should continue aggressive oversight of VA's mental health programming and associated funding, to include the Readjustment Counseling Service. The Committee should also continue overseeing VA's implementation of Public Law 114–2, the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act, which—among other things—requires VA to partner with community organizations to improve the transition process for veterans.

Capital Asset and Infrastructure Review.—The Committee must continue aggressive oversight of VA's documentation of major medical facility construction and leasing program needs and the market assessments needed to fully analyze and define the veteran population distribution and community support capacity as that overlays VA's vast and aging capital asset footprint.

VHA Organizational Structure.—The Committee should continue its examination of how the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) defines Veteran Integrated Service Networks (VISN) roles and responsibilities, including managing and overseeing VA medical centers and to what extent VISNs vary in implementing those roles and responsibilities—to include data reporting and monitoring/enforcing compliance with directives. It should continue to press VA to establish staffing models for all lines of care. With a current growth rate of approximately two to three percent per year, it is not clear whether the VA is prioritizing hiring against certain critical care shortages.

For example, a 2016 Government Accountability Office report on VA's human capital management found that VHA suffers from limited human resources capacity and weak internal control practices, both of which have undermined VA's ability to improve the delivery

of care to veteran patients. The Committee should continue to closely monitor VHA's HR Management Modernization effort and assess how that effort improves staffing and hiring practices. The Committee should also continue monitoring clinical productivity and efficiency throughout the VA healthcare system following a 2017 finding by the Government Accountability Office regarding significant barriers and limitations with respect to the metrics and models that VA uses to assess productivity and efficiency in VA medical facilities.

VA Research.—I share the majority's interest in VA research. The Committee should continue to promote the advancement of treatment and care for women through dedicated research focusing on the effects of combat and environmental exposure that may result in gender-specific physiological disabilities—with particular emphasis on the reproductive, endocrine, and immune systems.

Rural Veterans.—The Committee should assess VA's efforts to provide timely and accessible care to veterans in rural and hard-to-reach areas through tools like telehealth, community partnerships, and other means. The VA Mission Act included numerous provisions specifically designed to bolster underserved areas and facilities, recruit providers willing to serve in rural areas, and increase access for rural veterans and the Committee should work to ensure these provisions are implemented as intended.

Impact of Medicare for All.—Legislation has been introduced in the House of Representatives to expand Medicare to all Americans. While initial reports indicate that the Department of Veterans Affairs will be permitted to operate, such significant restructuring of the health care market is bound to impact the department. Therefore, the Committee must investigate the potential impact an expansion of Medicare will have on the department and health care services provided to veterans.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

Accountability.—I share the majority's interest in continued oversight of these issues. The Committee should continue its oversight over the implementation of the Veterans Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017. While VA data indicates that the total number of adverse actions against VA employees increased following passage of the Act, it does not necessarily support the claim that VA is disciplining lower lever employees at a higher rate than before the Act. The Committee should review how VA managers are using the new accountability measures authorized by this law. Further, the Committee should also review the operations of the Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection (OAWP). This review should include the office's staffing levels, budget, and adherence to law that created this office.

VA Administration, VA Employee Adverse Actions, and Federal Labor Protections.—I share the majority's interest in continued oversight of these issues. The Committee should continue its oversight over the implementation of the Veterans Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017. While VA data indicates that the total number of adverse actions against VA employees increased following passage of the Act, it does not necessarily support the claim that VA is disciplining lower lever employees at a higher rate than before the Act. The Committee should review how VA

managers are using the new accountability measures authorized by this law. Further, the Committee should also review the operations of the Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection (OAWP). This review should include the office's staffing levels, budget, and adherence to law that created this office.

Additionally, the Committee must investigate the impact that collective bargaining agreements have on the department's operations. In 2018, the department determined that medical personnel were no longer eligible for taxpayer funded official time. As a result, VA returned nearly 430 clinician positions to full-time veteran patient care. VA estimated the cost of the taxpayer funded union time of those clinicians to be nearly $49 million annually. As the Committee reviews federal labor protections at the department, it must fully understand the costs—both monetary and opportunity—of taxpayer funded union time and collective bargaining at VA.

Affiliations Agreements.—The Committee should continue to investigate the relationship of VA medical facilities and personnel with affiliated medical institutions, especially academic centers and those involved in research. The Committee should also evaluate the extent to which agreements between these entities promote an efficient allocation of VA resources for the welfare and health care of veterans. Further, the Committee should analyze VA's contracted care with academic affiliates in order to monitor the negotiation of costs for services and payment amounts to affiliates for medical and dental services.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY MODERNIZATION

Healthcare Innovation and Interoperability.—Beyond overseeing EHRM implementation, the Committee should work to ensure that VA adequately plans for and pursues the modernized enterprise data and analytics capabilities, clinical interoperability platform, and open-application program interfaces (APIs) that are necessary to benefit from advancements in the health information technology marketplace and achieve the comprehensive interoperability solution that is needed. This approach decreases risk to the EHRM program and maximizes enterprise value for veterans. VA has in the past primarily pursued analytics capabilities focused on business intelligence, and such technologies now in use in the department are fundamentally the same as those available in the early 2000s. The Committee should advocate expanding VA's clinical orchestration platforms, proactive standardization of Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS) workflows, limited modifications to VistA and CPRS where necessary to allow open-API-based applications to function in the CPRS workflows. It should also advocate for the creation of interoperable content, and the acquisition of third party web applications, with the goal of maintaining the enterprise-wide standard of care during the Cerner implementation and reducing EHRM implementation risk.

Financial Management System Modernization.—I share the majority's interest in the financial management system modernization. The Financial Management Business Transformation (FMBT) program seeks to replace VA's legacy core financial management system and related financial, accounting, and administrative software with one modern, commercial, integrated system. The Committee should be concerned that FMBT, which is now entering its third

year, lacks direction and firm requirements. To date, the program has relied on voluntary commitments from the various organizational units of the department to replace individual software packages. The Committee should also be concerned that FMBT's initial implementation cost estimate of $400 million has increased to a lifecycle cost estimate of over $2.3 billion in the relatively short time since its inception. The Committee should continue monitoring the program aggressively and base its oversight on the imperative that VA demonstrates meaningful new capabilities are being implemented over a timeline that corresponds to the department's functional needs.

Enterprise Investments.—I share the majority's interest in enterprise investments but note that VA information technology, specifically, is not presently on the GAO High Risk list. It appears that the majority is referring to VA's repeat Federal Information Security Modernization Act (FISMA) audit findings. VA's FISMA auditor continues to document many of the same findings since the annual audit commenced in 2015. Relatedly, VA is included within the GAO's "Improving the Management of IT Acquisitions and Operations" High Risk List area, which pertains to the federal government in general. Many of the Office of Information and Technology's information technology modernization initiatives are integral to the department's efforts to resolve the audit findings. The Committee will continue to evaluate such modernization initiatives in the context of their effectiveness in addressing the FISMA audit and federal-wide IT management weaknesses, which necessitates an enterprise-wide approach rather than further siloing of investments.

IT Workforce Investments.—I share the majority's concern about the Office of Information and Technology's increasing reliance on contractors but believe attributing the organization's problems to this alone is incorrect and recommend a more holistic oversight approach. The Office of Information and Technology's internal capacity to develop and manage its technology portfolio and has become severely degraded. Rapid turnover, low morale, the dispersed nature of the workforce, and the resulting escalating reliance on support contractors to manage even core operations are contributing factors. While the department has demonstrated some plans to prioritize staffing program offices, and has utilized the U.S. Digital Service in an exemplary and effective manner, it is not clear that there is a comprehensive workforce plan to address the deficit, or that budget planning reflects such a workforce plan. The Committee should continue to monitor VA's efforts to rebuild its technology expertise and assess whether workforce staffing plans will meet technology implementation needs and modernization plans.

Scheduling System Acquisition.—I share the majority's interest in the scheduling system implementation and add that in December 2018, VA announced its decision not to expand its Columbus, Ohio scheduling system pilot. Instead, the department will continue to acquire the Cerner Millennium scheduling package and implement it on an accelerated three-year timeline, as a component critical path in the EHRM integrated master schedule. Despite continuous Committee oversight of the matter, VA officials have provided little to no information about how this decision will be carried out or how it will impact the larger EHRM program. There-

fore, the Committee should assess VA's decision making process, the adequacy of the department's planning for the accelerated scheduling implementation, and its impacts.

Creation of Women Veterans Task Force

In the 116th Congress, the Committee authorized the creation of a bipartisan Women Veterans Task Force to focus on issues related to ensuring equity in access to care and benefits for women veterans.

ACTIVITIES OF THE FULL COMMITTEE

BUSINESS MEETINGS

Full Committee Business Meeting—Organization of the 116th Congress. On February 13, 2019, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs met to formally organize the Committee's membership and to adopt the rules of the Committee for the 116th Congress.

Full Committee Business Meeting. On June 20, 2019, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs met to assign Representative Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan of Northern Mariana Islands to the Subcommittee on Health.

Full Committee Business Meeting. On September 18, 2019, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs met to authorize the Women Veterans Task Force.

Full Committee Business Meeting. On March 12, 2020, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs met to reauthorize the Women Veterans Task Force.

Full Committee Business Meeting. On September 10, 2020, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs met to reauthorize the Women Veterans Task Force.

Full Committee Business Meeting. On December 2, 2020, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs met to consider the adoption of a report prepared by the Committee, entitled "Hijacking Our Heroes: Exploiting Veterans Through Disinformation on Social Media."

MARKUPS

Full Committee Markup. On May 8, 2019, the Full Committee held a markup on A.N.S. to H.R. 299, the "Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019"; A.N.S. to H.R. 2385, to permit the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a grant program to conduct cemetery research and produce educational materials for the Veterans Legacy Program; A.N.S. to H.R. 1988, the "Protect Affordable Mortgages for Veterans Act"; A.N.S. to H.R. 2372, the "Veterans" Care Quality Transparency Act"; A.N.S. to H.R. 2340, the "FIGHT Veteran Suicides Act"; A.N.S. to H.R. 2359, the "Whole Veteran Act"; H.R. 2333, the "Support for Suicide Prevention Coordinators Act"; H.R. 1126, the "Honoring Veterans Families Act"; H.R. 2045, the "VET OPP Act"; H.R. 1200, the "Veterans" Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act"; H.R. 1199, the "VA Website Accessibility Act"; H.R. 95, the "Homeless Veteran Families Act"; H.R. 2109, the "BRAVE Act"; H.R. 2196, to amend title 38, United States Code, to reduce the credit hour requirement for the Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship program of the Department of Veterans Affairs; H.R. 2326, the "Navy SEAL Chief Petty Officer William Bill Mulder (Ret.) Transition Improvement Act of 2019";

H.R. 2398, the "Veteran HOUSE Act"; H.R. 2399, the "Home for Our Heroes Act of 2019"; H.R. 1812, the "Vet Center Eligibility Expansion Act"; and H.R. 1947, to exempt transfers of funds from Federal agencies to the Department of Veterans Affairs for nonprofit corporations established under subchapter IV of chapter 73 of such title from certain provisions of the Economy Act. H.R. 2333, H.R. 1200, H.R. 1199, H.R. 95, H.R. 2109, H.R. 2196, H.R. 2398, H.R. 2399, and H.R. 2326 were ordered reported, without amendment. H.R. 299, H.R. 2372, H.R. 2340, H.R. 2359, H.R. 1947, H.R. 1812, H.R. 2385, H.R. 1988, and H.R. 2045 were ordered reported, as amended.

Full Committee Markup. On July 11, 2019, the Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 2942, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out the Women's Health Transition Training pilot program through at least fiscal year 2020, and for other purposes; H.R. 2943, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make all fact sheets of the Department of Veterans Affairs in English and Spanish; and H.R. 3504, to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for improvements to the specially adapted housing program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes. H.R. 2942, H.R. 2943, and H.R. 3504 were ordered reported, as amended.

Full Committee Markup. On October 16, 2019, the Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 4625, the "Protect the GI Bill Act"; H.R. 3749, the "Legal Services for Homeless Veterans Act"; H.R. 4613, the "VA Reporting Transparency Act"; H.R. 4477, the "Reducing High Risk to Veterans and Veterans Services Act"; H.R. 4162, the "GI Bill Planning Act of 2019"; and H.R. 561, the "Protecting Business Opportunities for Veterans Act of 2019". H.R. 4625, H.R. 3749, H.R. 4613, H.R. 4477, and H.R. 4162 were ordered reported, as amended. H.R. 561 was ordered reported, without amendment.

Full Committee Markup. On October 29, 2019, Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 4852, the "GIVE Act"; H.R. 4356, the "Protecting Families of Fallen Servicemembers Act"; H.R. 4183, the "Identifying Barriers and Best Practices Study Act"; H.R. 4360, the "VA Overpayment Accountability Act"; H.R. 3996, the "VA Design-Build Construction Enhancement Act of 2019"; H.R. 1424, the "Fallen Warrior Battlefield Cross Memorial Act"; A.N.S. to H.R. 3224, the "Deborah Sampson Act"; A.N.S. to H.R. 4771, to permit appellants to appear in disability compensation cases before the Board of Veterans Appeals by picture and voice transmission from locations other than VA facilities; A.N.S. to H.R. 2227, the "Gold Star Spouses and Spouses of Injured Servicemembers Leasing Relief Expansion Act of 2019"; and A.N.S. to H.R. 3530, the "Improving Confidence in Veterans Care Act". H.R. 4771, H.R. 2227, H.R. 4183, H.R. 3530, and H.R. 3224 were ordered reported, as amended. H.R. 4852, H.R. 4356, H.R. 4360, H.R. 3996, H.R. 1424, were ordered reported, without amendment.

Full Committee Markup. On December 5, 2019, the Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 4920, the "Department of Veterans Affairs Contracting Preference Consistency Act"; and H.R. 3495, the "Improve Well-Being for Veterans Act". H.R. 3495 was ordered reported, as amended. H.R. 4920 was ordered reported, without amendment.

Full Committee Markup. On March 12, 2020, the Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 712, the "VA Medical Cannabis Research Act"; A.N.S. to H.R. 2224, the "Homeless Veterans with Children Reintegration Act"; H.R. 3798, the "Equal Access to Contraception for Veterans Act"; A.N.S. to H.R. 5781, to amend title 38, United States Code, to make an individual who is eligible for educational assistance under chapter 33 of such title, transfers such educational assistance to a dependent, and fails to complete a service agreement, solely liable for any overpayment of such educational assistance; H.R. 6036, the "VA Family Leave Act of 2020"; A.N.S. to H.R. 5766, the "VET TEC Expansion Act"; H.R. 1647, the "Veterans Equal Access Act"; H.R. 6140, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship program; H.R. 6018, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to collect overpayments of specially adapted housing assistance; H.R. 6157, to improve the GI comparison tool program and update oversight of schools who convert from a profit to a non-profit school; H.R. 6168, to increase, effective as of December 1, 2020, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes; H.R. 5284, the "Vet OUTREACH Act"; H.R. 2816, the "Vietnam Era Veterans Hepatitis-C Testing Enhancement Act"; H.R. 2628, the "VET CARE Act"; H.R. 1527, the "Long Term Care Veterans Choice Act"; H.R. 1527, the "Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act"; H.R. 5750, the "Streamlining GI Bill Processing Act of 2020"; and S. 3084, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to modify the limitation on pay for certain high-level employees and officers of the Department of Veterans Affairs. H.R. 712, H.R. 2224, H.R. 3798, H.R. 5781, H.R. 6036, and H.R. 5766 were ordered reported, as amended. H.R. 1647, H.R. 6140, H.R. 6018, H.R. 6157, H.R. 6168, H.R. 5284, H.R. 2816, H.R. 2628, H.R. 1527, H.R. 5750, and S. 3084 were ordered reported, without amendment.

Full Committee Markup. On July 30, 2020, the Full Committee held a markup on A.N.S. to H.R. 5245, the "SHIELD for Veterans Act"; H.R. 5639, the "Chuck Osier Burial Benefits Act"; A.N.S. to H.R. 4908, the "Native American PACT Act"; A.N.S. to H.R. 2791, the "Department of Veterans Affairs Tribal Advisory Committee Act of 2019"; H.R. 3010, the "Honoring All Veterans Act"; A.N.S. to H.R. 6589, the "CFO Authority and Collaboration Act of 2020"; H.R. 4526, the "Brian Tally VA Employment Transparency Act"; H.R. 5487, the "Veterans Cemetery Grants Improvement Act"; A.N.S. to H.R. 7111, the "Veterans Economic Recovery Act of 2020"; A.N.S. to H.R. 3228, the "VA Mission Telehealth Clarification Act"; A.N.S. to H.R. 7445, to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand eligibility for home loans from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to certain members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces; and H.R. 7795, the "Veterans Benefits Fairness and Transparency Act". H.R. 5245, H.R. 4908, H.R. 2791, H.R. 6589, H.R. 7111, H.R. 3228, H.R. 7445, and H.R. 7795 were ordered reported, as amended. H.R. 5639, H.R. 3010, H.R. 4526, H.R. 7795, and H.R. 5487, were ordered reported, without amendment.

Full Committee Markup. On September 17, 2020, Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 8247, the "Veterans Comprehensive, Prevention, Access to Care, and Treatment Act of 2020"; A.N.S. to

H.R. 7163, the "VA FOIA Reform Act of 2020"; A.N.S. to H.R. 5843, the "Strengthening Oversight for Veterans Act of 2020"; A.N.S. to H.R. 7785, to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend certain employment and reemployment rights to members of the National Guard who perform State active duty; and H.R. 6092, the "Veteran's Prostate Cancer Treatment and Research Act". H.R. 8247, H.R. 7163, H.R. 5843, and H.R. 7785 were ordered reported, as amended. H.R. 6092 was ordered reported, without amendment.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

Full Committee Hearing—Joint House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs Hearing to receive the Legislative Presentation of Disabled American Veterans

On February 26, 2019, the full Committee held a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to receive the legislative priorities of Disabled American Veterans (DAV). DAV presented its legislative priorities to the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees for fiscal year 2019. The following witnesses from DAV testified: Mr. Dennis Nixon, National Commander; Mr. Jim Marszalek, National Service Director; Ms. Joy J. Ilem, National Legislative Director; Mr. Randy Reese, Executive Director, Washington Headquarters; Mr. J. Marc Burgess, National Adjutant; Mr. Barry A. Jesinoski, Executive Director, National Headquarters; Mr. John Kleindienst, National Director of Voluntary Service; Mr. Jeffrey C. Hall, National Director of Employment; and Ms. Ellen Timmerman, DAV Auxiliary National Commander.

Full Committee Hearing—Joint House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs Hearing to receive the Legislative Presentation of The American Legion

On February 27, 2019, the full Committee held a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to receive the legislative priorities of The American Legion (TAL). The following witnesses from TAL testified: Mr. Brett P. Reistad, National Commander; Mr. Joseph Sharpe, Director, Veterans Employment and Education Division; Mr. Vincent Troiola, Chairman, Veterans Employment and Education Commission; Mr. Matthew Shuman, National Legislative Director; Mr. Chanin Nuntavong, Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division; Mr. Ralph Bozella, Chairman, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission; and Mr. Randall Fisher, Chairman, National Legislative Commission.

Full Committee Meeting—Joint House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs Hearing to receive the Legislative Presentation of The Veterans of Foreign Wars

On March 6, 2019, the full Committee held a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to receive the legislative priorities of The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). The following witnesses from VFW testified: Mr. Vincent "B.J." Lawrence, Commander-in-Chief; Mr. Bob Wallace, Executive Director; Mr. Ryan Gallucci, Director, National Veterans Service; Mr. Carlos Fuentes, Director, National Legislative Service; and Mr. Darrell Bencken, National Legislative Committee Chairman.

Full Committee Meeting—Joint House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs Hearing to receive the Legislative Presentation of Multiple Veterans Service Organizations

On March 7, 2019, the full Committee held a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to receive the legislative priorities of Multiple Veterans Service Organizations: American Veterans (AMVETS), Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), Student Veterans of America (SVA), American Ex-Prisoners of War (AXPOW), and Wounded Warrior Project (WWP). The following witnesses testified: Mr. Regis William Riley, National Commander, American Veterans; Mr. David Zurfluh, National President, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Mr. John Rowan, National President/CEO, Vietnam Veterans of America; Mr. Jeremy Butler, Chief Executive Officer, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; Mr. Jared Lyon, National President & CEO, Student Veterans of America; Mr. Charles Anthony Susino, National Director/Legislative Office, American Ex-Prisoners of War; and Ms. Rene C. Bardorf, Senior Vice President for Government & Community Relations, Wounded Warrior Project.

Full Committee Meeting—Joint House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs to receive the Legislative Presentation of Multiple Veterans Service Organizations

On March 12, 2019, the full Committee held a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to receive the legislative priorities of multiple Veterans Service Organizations: National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affair (NASDVA), Fleet Reserve Association (FRA), Gold Star Wives of America (GSWA), Blinded Veterans Association (BVA), Jewish War Veterans (JWV), Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH), and Military Officers Association of America (MOAA). The following witnesses testified: Ms. Alfie Alvarado-Ramos, President, National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs, Director, Washington Department of Veterans' Affairs; Mr. Robert Washington, Sr., National President, Fleet Reserve Association; Mrs. Crystal Lynn Wenum, National President, Member, Government Relations Committee, Gold Star Wives of America; Mr. Thomas Zampieri, PhD, National President, Blinded Veterans Association; Mr. Barry J. Schneider, PhD., National Commander, Jewish War Veterans; Mr. Douglas J. Greenlaw, National Commander, Military Order of the Purple Heart; and Ms. René Campos, Senior Director of Government Relations for Veterans-Wounded Warrior Care, Military Officers Association of America.

Full Committee Legislative Hearing—H.R. 2943, H.R. 2942, H.R. 2676, H.R. 2677, H.R. 712, H.R. 1647, H.R. 3083, H.R. 485, Discussion Draft—Specially Adaptive Housing, Discussion Draft—Work Study

On June 20, 2019, the full Committee met in open session for a legislative hearing on the above legislation. There were three witness panels. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: Ranking Member David P. Roe, M.D. (Tennessee), Representative J. Luis Correa (California), Representative Gilbert R. Cisneros

(California), and Representative Gus M. Bilirakis (Florida). The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Mr. Adrian Atizado, Deputy National Director, Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Travis Horr, Director, Government Affairs, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; Mr. Carlos Fuentes, Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of America; Mr. Derek Fronabarger, Director, Government Affairs, Wounded Warrior Project; and Dr. Igor, Grant, M.D., F.R.C.P, Director, Center for Medical Cannabis Research, University of California. The following witness testified on the third panel: Dr. Larry Mole, Chief Consultant for Population Health Services, Office of Patient Care Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Full Committee Legislative Hearing—H.R. 3495 and Draft bill to Establish a Pilot Program for the Issuance of Grants to Eligible Entities

On November 20, 2019, the full Committee met in an open session to conduct a legislative hearing on the above legislation. There were two witness panels. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: The Honorable Robert Wilkie, Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Richard Stone, Executive in Charge, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. David Carroll, Executive Director, Office of Mental Health, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Adrian Atizado, Deputy National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Blake Bourne, Executive Director, Veterans Bridge Home; Ms. Melissa Bryant, National Legislative Director, The American Legion; and Mr. Sherman Gillums Jr., Chief Efficacy Officer, AMVETS.

Full Committee Hearing—Joint House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs to receive the Legislative Presentation of Disabled American Veterans

On February 25, 2020, the full Committee held a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to receive the legislative priorities of Disabled American Veterans (DAV). It is also important to note that in 2020, DAV celebrated 100 years of service to veterans. The following DAV witnesses testified: Mr. Stephen Whitehead, National Commander; Mr. Jim Marszalek, National Service Director; Ms. Joy J. Ilem, National Legislative Director; Mr. Randy Reese, Executive Director, Washington Headquarters; Mr. J. Marc Burgess, National Adjutant; Mr. Barry A. Jesinoski, Executive Director, National Headquarters; Mr. Dan Clare, Chief Communications and Outreach Officer; and Ms. Diane J. Franz, DAV Auxiliary National Commander.

Full Committee Hearing—Joint House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs to receive the Legislative Presentation of Multiple Veterans Service Organizations

On February 26, 2020, the full Committee held a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to receive the legislative priorities of multiple Veterans Service Organizations: Wounded Warrior Project (WWP), Blinded Veterans of America (BVA), National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA),

Jewish War Veterans (JWV), Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A., Incl. (MOPH), and American Veterans (AMVETS). The following witnesses testified: Lieutenant General Michael S. Linnington (Ret.), Chief Executive Officer, Wounded Warrior Project; Mr. Thomas A. Zampieri, National President, Blinded Veterans Association; Mr. John Hilgert, President, National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs, Director, Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs; Mr. Harvey Weiner, National Commander, Jewish War Veterans; Mr. John Rowan, National President, Vietnam Veterans of America; Mr. Felix Garcia, III., National Commander, Military Order of the Purple Heart; and Ms. Jan Brown, National Commander, American Veterans.

Full Committee Hearing—Joint House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs to receive the Legislative Presentation of Multiple Veterans Service Organizations

On March 3, 2020, the full Committee held a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to receive the legislative priorities of Multiple Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs): American Ex-Prisoners of War (AXPOW), Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), Student Veterans of America (SVA), Gold Star Wives of America (GSWA), Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), Fleet Reserve Association (FRA), and Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA). The following witnesses testified: Mr. Robert Certain, National Commander, American Ex-Prisoners of War; Mr. David Zurfluh, National President, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Mr. Jared Lyon, National President & CEO, Student Veterans of America; Mrs. Crystal Lynn Wenum, National President, Gold Star Wives of America; Ms. René A. Campos; Senior Director of Government Relations for Veterans-Wounded Warrior Care, Military Officers Association of America; Ms. Donna Jansky, National President, Fleet Reserve Association; and Mr. Jeremy Butler, Chief Executive Officer, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America.

Full Committee Hearing—Joint House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs to receive the Legislative Presentation of Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

On March 4, 2020, the full Committee held a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to receive the legislative priorities of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). The following VFW witnesses testified: Mr. William J. "Doc" Schmitz, Commander-in-Chief; Mr. Vincent "B.J." Lawrence, Executive Director; Mr. Ryan Gallucci, Director, National Veterans Service; Mr. Carlos Fuentes, Director, National Legislative Service; and Mr. Ronald "Rusko" Rusakiewicz, National Legislative Committee Chairman.

Full Committee Hearing—Joint House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs to receive the Legislative Presentation of The American Legion

On March 11, 2020, the full Committee held a joint hearing with the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to receive the legislative priorities of The American Legion (TAL). The following TAL wit-

nesses testified: Mr. James W. "Bill" Oxford, National Commander; Mr. Joseph Sharpe, Director, Veterans Employment and Education Division; Ms. Melissa Bryant, Director, National Legislative Division; Mr. Chanin Nuntavong, Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division; Mr. Ralph Bozella, Chairman, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission; and Mr. Vincent Troiola, Chairman, National Legislative Commission.

Full Committee Legislative Hearing—H.R. 6039; H.R. 6082; H.R. 4908; H.R. 2791; H.R. 4526; H.R. 3582; H.R. 96; H.R. 4281; H.R. 3010; H.R. 7163;H.R. 7111; H.R. 2435; H.R. 7287; H.R. 3228; H.R. 6141; H.R. 7445; H.R. 6493; Discussion Draft—Burial Equity for Guards and Reserves Act of 2020; Discussion Draft—To amend title 38, United States Code, to extend certain employment and reemployment rights to members of the National Guard who perform State active duty; Discussion Draft—To amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the scope of procedural rights of members of the uniformed services with respect to their employment and reemployment rights, and for other purposes.

On July 23, 2020, the full Committee met in open session (in-person and via Cisco Webex) for a legislative hearing on the above legislation. There were three witness panels. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: Representative Mike Levin (California), Representative Chris Pappas (New Hampshire), Representative Julia Brownley (California) (remote attendance), Representative Lauren Underwood (Illinois) (remote attendance), Representative Kathleen Rice (New York) (remote attendance), Representative Gilbert Cisneros (California), Representative Mike Bost (Illinois), Representative Andy Barr (Kentucky), and Representative Max Rose (New York). The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Dr. Maria Llorente, Assistant Deputy Undersecretary for Health for Patient Care Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Beth Murphy, Executive Director of Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Glenn Powers, Deputy Under Secretary for Field Programs and Cemetery Operations, National Cemetery Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Amanda Johnson, Director of Reproductive Health, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (remote attendance); Ms. Yuri Walker, Director, Risk Management Program, Office of Integrity, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (remote attendance); and Ms. Charmain Bogue, Executive Director, Education Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (remote attendance). The following witnesses testified on the third panel: Ms. Patricia Jackson-Kelley, National President, National Association of Black Military Women (remote attendance); Ms. Katie Purswell, Deputy Director, Health Policy, The American Legion (remote attendance); Mr. Kevin Allis, CEO, National Congress of American Indians (remote attendance); and Ms. Lindsay Church, Executive Director, Minority Veterans of America (remote attendance).

Full Committee Legislative Hearing—H.R. 7541; H.R. 7504; H.R. 7784; H.R. 7879; H.R. 7747, H.R. 7888; H.R. 7964; H.R. 3450; H.R. 3788; H.R. 3826; H.R. 6092; H.R. 7469; H.R. 8005; H.R. 8033; H.R. 8084; H.R. 8068; H.R. 8149; H.R. 8148; H.R. 8108; H.R. 8144; H.R. 8145; H.R. 8130; H.R. 8107; H.R. 8147; H.R. 8172; H.R. 8173; A.N.S. to H.R. 5697; Discussion Draft—Veterans Comprehensive Prevention, Access to Care, and Treatment Act of 2020; Discussion Draft—Ensuring Veterans' Smooth Transition Act; Discussion Draft—VA Expanded Care Hours Act; Discussion Draft—Veterans Burn Pits Exposure Recognition Act of 2020.

On September 10, 2020, the full Committee met in open session (in-person and via Cisco Webex) to conduct a remote legislative hearing on the above legislation. There were two witness panels. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: Representative Susie Lee (Nevada), Representative Chip Roy (Texas), Representative Andy Barr (Kentucky), Representative Phil Roe (Tennessee), Representative Neal Dunn (Florida), Representative Anthony Brindisi (New York), Representative Lauren Underwood (Illinois), Representative Julia Brownley (California), Representative Conor Lamb (Pennsylvania), and Representative Elaine Luria (Virginia). The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Ms. Lindsay Church, Executive Director, Minority Veterans of America; Ms. Maureen Elias, Associate Legislative Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Ms. Joy Ilem, National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Patrick Murray, Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Dr. Russell Lemle, Senior Policy Analyst, Veterans Healthcare Policy Institute; and Mr. Jim Lorraine, Lt. Col., USAF, (Ret.), President & Chief Executive Officer, America's Warrior Partnership.

OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

Full Committee Hearing—"VA 2030: A Vision for the Future of VA"

On February 27, 2019, the full Committee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing to examine how VA intends to deliver care and services to veterans in the future, while taking into account rapidly changing veteran demographics and multiple ongoing large projects that seek to modernize the enterprise. The following witnesses testified: The Honorable Robert Wilkie, Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Dr. Richard Stone, Executive in Charge, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Full Committee Hearing—"MISSION Critical: Assessing the Technology to Support Community Care"

On April 2, 2019, the full Committee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing to examine the implementation of the MISSION Act, Public Law 115–182. The hearing examined the alarming findings of a U.S. Digital Service report related to VA's readiness to implement technology systems necessary to support the Community Care components of the MISSION Act. The following witnesses testified : Dr. Richard Stone, Executive in Charge,

Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; The Honorable Mr. James Gfrerer, Assistant Secretary for the Office of Information Technology and Chief Information Officer, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and The Honorable Dr. Melissa Glynn, Assistant Secretary for Enterprise Integration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Full Committee Hearing—"U.S. Department of Veterans" Affairs Budget Request for FY 2020"

On April 3, 2019, the full Committee met in open session to discuss VA's budget priorities and proposed funding levels for FY 2020. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: The Honorable Mr. Robert Wilkie, Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; The Honorable Dr. Paul Lawrence, Under Secretary for Benefits, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Richard Stone, Executive in Charge, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; The Honorable Mr. Jon Rychalski, Assistant Secretary of Management and Chief Financial Officer, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Ms. Joy Ilem, National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Ms. Heather Ansley, Associate Executive Director of Government Relations, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Mr. Patrick Murray, Associate Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; and Larry L. Lohmann, Senior Legislative Associate, Legislative Division, The American Legion.

Full Committee Hearing—"Tragic Trends: Suicide Prevention Among Veterans"

On April 29, 2019, the full Committee met in open session to examine the heartbreaking trend of veteran suicide on the grounds of VA facilities. The hearing also examined VA's recent shift toward suicide prevention as part of a public health model; VA's data analysis and surveillance efforts; the development of effective interventions; and the support, training, and counseling VA offers to veterans' families, frontline providers, support staff, and security personnel in response to an on-campus suicide. The following witnesses testified: Dr. Shelli Avenevoli, Deputy Director, National Institute of Mental Health; Dr. Richard McKeon, Chief, Suicide Prevention Branch, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; Dr. Richard Stone, Executive in Charge, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Dr. Keita Franklin, National Director of Suicide Prevention, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Full Committee Hearing—"True Transparency? Assessing Wait Times Five Years after Phoenix"

On July 24, 2019, the full Committee met in open session to examine how VA currently measures veterans' access to health care, both internally and in the community, what information VA makes available to veterans, and the accuracy of VA's reported wait times. The hearing also examined how other health care systems monitor patients' access to care and whether opportunities exist to improve the transparency and availability of VA's wait time data, so that veterans can make informed choices about where to receive their care. The following witnesses testified: Dr. Debra Draper, Director,

Health Care Team, U.S. Government Accountability Office; Dr. Teresa S. Boyd, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Clinical Operations, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Susan R. Kirsh, Acting Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Access to Care, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Clinton "Leo" Greenstone, Deputy Executive Director for Clinical Integrity, Office of Community Care, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Dr. Kenneth W. Kizer, Chief Healthcare Transformation Officer and Senior Executive Vice President, Atlas Research, Inc.

Full Committee Hearing—"Member Day 2019"

On September 10, 2019, the full Committee met in open session to hear from all interested Members on legislation and issues within the Committee's jurisdiction. The following Members testified: Representative Steve Womack (Arkansas), Representative Steve Stivers (Ohio), Representative Salud Carbajal (California), Representative Scott Peters (California), Representative Vicky Hartzler (Missouri), Representative Stacey Plaskett (U.S. Virgin Islands), Representative Dean Phillips (Minnesota), Representative Brian Mast (Florida), Representative Earl L. "Buddy" Carter (Georgia), Representative David Rouzer (North Carolina), Representative Debbie Mucarsel-Powell (Florida), Representative Tom Malinowski (New Jersey), Representative Darren Soto (Florida), Representative Elise M. Stefanik (New York), Representative Brad Wenstrup (Ohio), Representative Kevin McCarthy (California), Representative Tim Walberg (Michigan), Representative Clay Higgins (Louisiana), Representative Lee Zeldin (New York), Representative Bill Johnson (Ohio), Representative Raul Ruiz (California), Representative Lloyd Smucker (Pennsylvania), Representative Joaquin Castro (Texas), Representative John R. Carter (Texas), Representative French J. Hill of Arkansas, Representative Jim Baird of Indiana, Representative Ann McLane Kuster of New Hampshire, Representative Ross Spano (Florida), Representative Robert J. Wittman (Virginia), and Representative Jim Costa (California).

Full Committee Hearing—"Critical Impact: How Barriers to Hiring at VA Affect Patient Care and Access"

On September 18, 2019, the full Committee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing on how pay, cost of living, hypercompetitive employment regions, and administrative barriers impact VA's ability to hire and retain talented employees across all occupations. The Committee reviewed how VA engages with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to address these longstanding staffing challenges. The following witnesses testified: Mr. Daniel R. Sitterly, Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration/Operations Security, and Preparedness, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Jessica Bonjorni, Acting Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Workforce Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. John D. Oswalt, Deputy Chief Information Officer for Information Technology Resource Management, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; the Honorable Michael Missal, Inspector General, VA Office of Inspector General,

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and, Mr. Robert Goldenkoff, Director, Strategic Issues, U.S. Government Accountability Office.

Full Committee Hearing—"Hijacking our Heroes: Exploiting Veterans through Disinformation on Social Media"

On November 13, 2019, the full Committee met in open session to conduct an investigative hearing examining internet spoofing, focused on the targeting of veterans and veterans' groups. The hearing explored the misappropriation of veterans' identities for the dissemination of fake news and political propaganda, romance scams, and commercial fraud. The purpose of the hearing was to understand the nature and scope of the issue, to learn about the challenges in identifying and eliminating these threats, best practices for preventative policies, and other ideas on how to better defend against this threat. The following witnesses testified: Mr. Kristofer Goldsmith, Chief Investigator and Associate Director of Policy and Government Affairs, Vietnam Veterans of America; Dr. Vladimir Barash, Science Director, Graphika; Mr. Kevin Kane, Public Policy Manager, Twitter; and Mr. Nathaniel Gleicher, Head of Security Policy, Facebook.

Full Committee Hearing—"Caring for Veterans in Crisis: Ensuring a Comprehensive Health System Approach"

On January 29, 2020, the full Committee on Veterans' Affairs met in open session to examine the extent to which VHA has adopted a comprehensive approach to suicide prevention. The hearing explored how VHA policies and employee training related to identifying veterans at risk of suicide; VHA's coordination of care for veterans at risk of suicide; the role of VA's police force in identifying and responding to veterans in crisis on VHA campuses; and the extent to which VHA is maintaining a safe and therapeutic environment for veterans experiencing mental health crises. In addition, the committee examined the efforts of other U.S. health care systems to adopt a comprehensive approach to suicide prevention, and considered whether there are any lessons learned that could be adopted by VA. This hearing provided an opportunity for VA to update the Committee on its progress toward addressing a number of concerning findings and recommendations from the IG, to discuss any challenges VA faces in this area, and to identify opportunities for strengthening VHA's approach to comprehensive suicide prevention. The following witnesses testified: Ms. Renee Oshinski, Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. David Carroll, Executive Director, Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Frederick Jackson, Senior Executive Director, Office of Security and Law Enforcement, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Julie Kroviak, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Healthcare Inspections; Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. C. Edward Coffey, Affiliate Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston, SC.

Full Committee Hearing—"The U.S. Department of Veterans" Affairs Budget Request for FY 2021"

On February 27, 2020, the full Committee on Veterans' Affairs met in open session to examine VA's budget request for fiscal year 2021. The following witnesses testified: The Honorable Robert Wilkie, Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Paul Lawrence, Under Secretary for Benefits, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Richard Stone, Executive in Charge, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Jon Rychalski, Assistant Secretary of Management and Chief Financial Officer, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Full Committee Forum—"Coronavirus Pandemic Response: The Impact of Economic and Health Care Services on Homeless Veterans in America"

On April 28, 2020, the full Committee held a remote forum (via Cisco Webex) to discuss the concerns and comments of stakeholders on the impact of the Novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID–19) pandemic on homeless veterans, including the impact on social, housing, and health care services that provide resources to this community and any trends on veterans' homelessness due to COVID–19's economic impact, community need in the recovery phase to reintegrate veterans into their communities and length of time for reintegration. The following witness testified: Ms. Kathryn Monet, Chief Executive Officer, National Coalition for Homeless Veterans.

Full Committee Hearing—"Assessing VA's Response to the COVID–19 Pandemic: 90 Days Later"

On June 11, 2020, the full Committee met in open session (in-person and via Cisco Webex) to examine VA's efforts throughout the COVID–19 public health emergency to care for veterans, protect its workforce, and support the delivery of care to non-veterans in communities nationwide through its Fourth Mission. Among other things, the Committee discussed VA's COVID–19 testing and contact tracing capabilities and protocols for veterans and employees; guidance for veterans and employees on self-isolation and self-quarantine; challenges VA faced with supply chain and inventory management for personal protective equipment (PPE), and the extent to which VA was adequately supplied for the ongoing pandemic; assistance VA provided to state veterans homes, community nursing homes, and prisons, and what challenges, if any, VA has encountered providing humanitarian assistance through its fourth mission; and VA's preparations for possible resurgences in COVID–19 infection rates. The following witnesses testified: Dr. Richard Stone, Executive in Charge, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Deborah Kramer, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Support Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Dr. Larry Mole, Executive Director, Office of Public Health, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Full Committee Hearing—"A Time for Change: Assessing the Need to Modernize Veteran Eligibility for Care"

On December 2, 2020, the full Committee met in open session (in-person and via Cisco Webex) to conduct an oversight hearing

examining veteran eligibility to enroll in the VA healthcare system. A veteran's ability to enroll in VA care is based on an enrollment priority group system that was established by Congress in the Veterans' Health Care Eligibility Reform Act of 1996. During this hearing, the Committee assessed how well that system serves the current generation of servicemembers and veterans, including those who were exposed to toxic substances during their military service and those who were discharged under conditions that were less than honorable. The hearing included a discussion of H.R. 7469, the Modernizing Veterans' Healthcare Eligibility Act, which was based on a recommendation from the bipartisan Commission on Care to establish an expert body to develop recommendations for VA care eligibility and benefits design. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: Mr. Sidath Panangala, Specialist in Veterans Policy, Congressional Research Service (remote attendance); Mr. Patrick Murray, Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars (remote attendance); Mr. Marquis Barefield, National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans (remote attendance); Mr. Roscoe Butler, Associate Legislative Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America (remote attendance); Mr. Jeffrey Steele, Legislative Associate, National Legislative Division, The American Legion (remote attendance). The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Ms. Tammy Czarnecki, Deputy to the Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Operations, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Garth Miller, Director, Member Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Ms. Valerie Mattison Brown, Chief Strategy Officer, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

SITE VISITS

San Juan, Puerto Rico. On January 12, 2019, Chairman Takano visited the VA Caribbean Health Care System in San Juan, Puerto Rico to receive an update and status of VA's Fourth Mission in Puerto Rico (i.e. response to recent weather events, refit, preparedness for the next hurricane season, residual damage, funds used and needed for future major & minor construction). While visiting the San Juan, Puerto Rico VA medical center the Chairman also met with members from the federal employee union representing VA employees, American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE).

Nashville, Tennessee. On January 18, 2019, Ranking Member Roe visited the Nashville Regional Benefits Office, Systematic Technical Accuracy Review (STAR) facility, and the Nashville VA Medical Center. The Ranking Member conducted oversight of VA's implementation of the Rapid Appeals Modernization Program (RAMP) and the STAR quality review program. While visiting the regional office, the Ranking Member also met with co-located VSOs and employees who processed RAMP claims, as well as, employees at the STAR Facility. Ranking Member Roe also visited the Nashville VA Medical Center, to include its Vanderbilt affiliate, with an emphasis on robotic surgery and telehealth advancements.

Seattle, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Bremerton, Washington. On April 15–17, 2019, Chairman Takano and Chairwoman Susie Lee (NV–03) traveled to the Pacific Northwest to conduct oversight of

the implementation of the Electronic Health Record Modernization (EHRM) program and Transition Assistance Program (TAP), and to hold meetings and briefings at the Seattle Division of the VA Puget Sound Healthcare System, Madigan Army Medical Center, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, and Naval Base Kitsap. This CODEL was supported by majority staff from the Subcommittees on Economic Opportunity and Technology Modernization.

Jackson, Michigan and Fort Wayne, Indiana. On May 6, 2109, Ranking Member Roe met with local veterans, VA staff, VSO representatives, and members of the Congressional delegation at the Jackson CBOC and the VA Northern Indiana Health Care System Fort Wayne Campus to assess the care, benefits, and services available to veterans in Jackson, Michigan, and Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Atlanta, Georgia. On May 13, 2019, Chairman Takano and Representative Lucy McBath (GA–06) and three majority Committee staff traveled to the Atlanta VA Medical Center (VAMC) to gather information about what VA was doing to address the facility's one-star rating and a veteran suicide that occurred on campus in April 2019, as well as to obtain perspectives from the facility's executive leadership, VA clinicians and other VA employees, and a group of veterans that receive health care at Atlanta-area VA facilities, about the Atlanta VAMC's remaining challenges. This CODEL was supported by majority staff from the Subcommittees on Health and Oversight and Investigations.

Boston, Massachusetts. On May 30, 2019, Chairman Takano and Representative Joe Kennedy, III (MA–04) visited the Jamaica Plain VA Medical Center in Boston, MA. The purpose of visit was to discuss the VA Boston Healthcare System's readiness to implement the community care program that was created under the MISSION Act of 2018, and learn about various research programs based in Boston, including the Women's Health Sciences Division of the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, the VA Biorepository Brain Bank, and the Million Veteran Program. This CODEL was supported by majority staff from the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

Loma Linda, California. On July 1, 2019, Chairman Takano and a majority Committee staff member traveled to the Loma Linda VA Healthcare System to discuss the facility's plans to implement 12 recommendations from a June 18, 2019, IG report: *Review of Environment of Care, Infection Control Practices, Provider Availability, and Leadership; VA Loma Linda Healthcare System, California.*

Puerto Rico. On July 19–20, 2019, Chairman Takano led a congressional delegation (CODEL) to San Juan, Guayama, and Ponce, Puerto Rico, to observe the unique challenges for veterans living in regions most acutely impacted by Hurricane Maria. Five majority staff of the Committee accompanied the five-Member, bipartisan CODEL on the trip. Traveling with the Chairman were Chairwoman Julia Brownley (CA–26), Representative Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen (AS), Representative Gregorio Sablan (NMI), and Representative Jenniffer González-Colón (PR). On July 19, the CODEL visited the San Juan VA Medical Center and discussed how VA did and did not serve its Fourth Mission function after Hurricane Maria and what improvements have been made to better respond to the next disaster. On July 20, the CODEL visited with veterans in San Juan, Guayama, and Ponce and heard stories of

their harrowing experiences during and after Maria and the needs still not met in the two years since. This CODEL was supported by majority staff from the Subcommittee on Health.

Lexington, Kentucky. On September 4, 2019 Ranking Member Roe and Committee member, Representative Andy Barr (KY–06), travelled to Lexington, KY to visit the Troy Bolling VA Medical Center, meet the new Director, and visit multiple clinics within the facility.

Little Rock, Arkansas. On September 6, 2019, Chairman Takano joined Representative French Hill (Arkansas) for a visit to the Little Rock VA Medical Center (VAMC), which is one of two hospital campuses that comprise the Central Arkansas VA Health Care System (CAVHS). The CAVHS was part of the first wave of facilities to launch VA's Whole Health Initiative in fiscal year 2018, a program that embraces the use of alternative treatment modalities such as acupuncture, yoga, and chiropractic medicine to improve veterans' health and wellbeing.

Seattle, Washington. On October 1–3, 2019, Ranking Member Roe and a minority staff member travelled to Seattle and American Lake, WA to visit the Puget Sound VA Health Care System and meet with employees to discuss preparations for the Electronic Health Record Modernization program's forthcoming implementation of the Cerner electronic health record.

Hawaii, Guam, Saipan and the Philippines. On October 1–10, 2019, Chairman Takano led a bipartisan CODEL to the Pacific. Traveling with the Chairman on the CODEL were Chairwoman Julia Brownley (CA–26), Vice Ranking Member Representative Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen (AS), Representative Gregorio Sablan (NMI), and Representative Michael San Nicolas (GU). Four majority staff and two minority staff of the Committee accompanied the five-Member, bipartisan CODEL on the trip. The purpose of the CODEL was to better understand the needs of veterans who live outside of the U.S. mainland. Additionally, Members received security briefings regarding the geopolitical situation in the Pacific.

Harlingen, Texas. On November 22, 2019, Chairman Takano and Representative Filemon Vela (TX–34) visited the VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System in Harlingen, Texas. The Members held meetings with veterans, VA employees, and the executive leadership of the Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System to conduct oversight of quality of care, access to care, and employee morale at the facility. This CODEL was supported by majority staff from the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

Kuwait and Afghanistan. On November 25–December 1, 2019, Chairman Takano led a CODEL to Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan. Five majority staff and one minority staff accompanied the five-Member CODEL. Traveling along with Chairman Takano on the CODEL were Vice Chairman, Representative Conor Lamb (PA–17), Representative Colin Allred (TX–32), Representative Lauren Underwood (IL–14), and Representative Haley Stevens (MI–11). The purpose of the CODEL was to conduct meetings and hold bilateral discussions with U.S. military and international officials and leaders on matters that are critical to our nation's security and global cooperation within the jurisdiction of the Committee, as well as to meet with deployed troops. These issues included delivery of

healthcare for our military personnel and veterans, as well as access to military transition training and benefits. The Members of the delegation spent Thursday, November 28 serving deployed military personnel their Thanksgiving Day lunch at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON DISABILITY ASSISTANCE AND MEMORIAL AFFAIRS

ELAINE G. LURIA, Virginia, *Chair*
MIKE BOST, Illinois, *Ranking Member*

GILBERT R. CISNEROS, California
GREGORIO KILILI SABLAN, Northern Mariana Islands
COLIN ALLRED, Texas
LAUREN UNDERWOOD, Illinois
GUS M. BILIRAKIS, Florida
GREG STEUBE, Florida

JULIE TURNER, *Majority Staff Director*
MARIA TRIPPLAAR, *Minority Staff Director*
CAROLYN BLAYDES, *Majority Staff Director—retired 2019*

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

Subcommittee Legislative hearing—"H.R. 1199, H.R. 1200, H.R. 1126, H.R. 1628, H.R. 1826, a draft bill to permit the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a grant program to conduct cemetery research and produce educational materials for the Veterans Legacy Program, and a draft update of H.R. 299."

On May 1, 2019, the subcommittee met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on the above legislation. There were four panels. The following witness testified on the first panel: Representative Mark Takano (California), Chairman Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Representative David P. Roe, M.D. (Tennessee), Ranking Member, Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Representative Conor Lamb (Pennsylvania), Vice Chair Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Representative Greg Steube (Florida), and Representative Julia Brownley (California). The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Mr. Matthew Sullivan, Deputy Under Secretary for Finance and Planning, National Cemetery Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Kevin Friel, Deputy Director for Pension and Fiduciary, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Patricia Hastings, Deputy Chief Consultant, Post-Deployment Health Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Derrick Curtis, Director Software Testing & 508 Enterprise Portfolio Management Division, Office of Information Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The following witnesses testified on the third panel: Ms. Melanie Brunson, Government Relations Officer, Blinded Veterans Association; Mr. Karl R. Horst, Major General, U.S. Army (Ret), President and Chief Executive Officer, Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation; and Ms. Allison Adelle Hedge Coke, Distinguished Professor of Creative Writing, University of California, Riverside. The following witnesses testified on the fourth panel: Mr. Carlos Fuentes, Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Mr. Rick Weidman, Executive Director, Policy and Government Affairs, Vietnam Veterans of America; Mr. Chanin Nuntavong, Director, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, The American Legion; Mr. Shane L. Liermann, Assistant National, Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Dr. David A. Butler, Director, Office of Military and Veterans Health, Health and Medicine Division, The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; Dr. Ourania Kosti, Senior Program Officer, Principal Investigator, Radiation, Effects Research Foundation, The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; Ourania Kosti, Senior Program Officer, Principal Investigator, Radiation, Effects Research Foundation, The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

Subcommittee Legislative Hearing—"Ensuring Access to Disability Benefits for Veteran Survivors of Military Sexual Trauma (MST)."

On June 20, 2019, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing regarding H.R. 1092, the Servicemembers

and Veterans Empowerment and Support Act of 2019, related to the Subcommittee's oversight of disability claims processing of MST-related claims at VBA, including the Department's response to the IG's August 2018 report and recommendations.

There were three witness panels. The following witness testified on the first panel: Representative Chellie Pingree (Maine). The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Mr. Willie Clark, Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Beth Murphy, Executive Director, Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Margret Bell, Ph.D., National Deputy Director for Military Sexual Trauma, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Steve Bracci, Director, Denver Benefits Inspection, VA Office of Inspector General. The following witnesses testified on the third panel: Colonel Don Christensen, President, Protect Our Defenders; Ms. Elizabeth Tarloski, Adjunct Professor, Lewis B. Puller Jr. Veteran's Benefits Clinic, William and Mary Law School; Mr. Shane L. Liermann, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; and Dr. Sharyn Potter, PhD, MPH, Executive Director of Research, Prevention Innovations Research Center, University of New Hampshire.

Subcommittee Legislative Hearing—"H.R. 4360, H.R. 592, H.R. 1030, H.R. 4165, H.R. 4183, H.R. 628, H.R. 1424, H.R. 1911, a draft bill to extend increased dependency and indemnity compensation paid to surviving spouses of veterans who die from ALS, and a draft bill to permit appellants to appear before the Board of Veterans' Appeals via picture and voice transmission from locations outside the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)."

On October 22, 2019, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on the above legislation. There were three witness panels. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: Representative Chellie Pingree (Maine) Representative Julia Brownley (California), Representative Antonio Delgado (New York), Representative Ted Yoho (Florida), Representative Michael Waltz (Florida). The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Mr. Ronald Burke, Executive Director of Pension & Fiduciary Services, Veterans Benefit Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Kimberly McLeod, Deputy Vice Chairman, Board of Veterans' Appeals, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The following witnesses testified on the third panel: Mr. Shane Liermann, National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Brian Dempsey, Government Affairs Director; Wounded Warrior Project; and Ms. Ashlynne Haycock, Deputy Director of Policy & Legislation, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors.

Subcommittee Legislative Hearing—"H.R. 5639, H.R. 5487, H.R. 5048, H.R. 5019, H.R. 697, H.R. 6013, H.R. 6060, H.R. 7443"

On July 16, 2020, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on the above legislation. There were three witness panels. The following witnesses testified on the first

panel: Representative Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan (Northern Mariana Islands); Representative Colin Allred (Texas); Representative Steve Watkins (Kansas); Representative Anthony Brindisi (New York); Representative Antonio Delgado (New York); and Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton (Washington, D.C.). The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Mr. Matthew Sullivan, Deputy Under Secretary for Finance and Planning, National Cemetery Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Dan Keenaghan, Executive Director, Insurance Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Laurine Carson, Deputy Executive Director, Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration; U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Sean Clark, National Director, Veterans Justice Programs, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The following witnesses testified on the third panel: Mr. Matthew Doyle, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Mr. Frank Logalbo, Benefits Training Manager, Wounded Warrior Project; Mr. Shane Liermann, Deputy National Legislative Director for Benefits, Disabled American Veterans; and Ms. Diane Rauber, Executive Director, National Organization of Veterans' Advocates.

OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

Subcommittee Hearing—"Update on VA Contracted Exams, Quality Review Process, and Service to Rural Veterans"

On September 19, 2019, the Subcommittee conducted an oversight hearing to examine challenges in contract exams. There were two witness panels. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: Ms. Mary Glenn, Deputy Director, Veterans Benefit Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Ms. Elizabeth Curda, Director of Workforce and Income Security Issues, U.S. Government Accountability Office. The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Mr. Rick Weidman, Executive Director for Public Policy, Vietnam Veterans of America; Mr. Shane Liermann, National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Ken Wiseman, State Adjutant and Accredited VSO, Veterans of Foreign Wars (Department of Virginia); and Ms. Kimberly Shalloo, Washington DC Liaison Chair; National Association of County Veteran Service Officers.

Subcommittee Forum—"Veterans' Disability Examinations in the Time of COVID–19: A Way Forward"

On May 27, 2020, the Subcommittee held a remote forum to examine concerns related to VA's resumption of in-person exams, including public health and safety, and VBA's ability to swiftly respond to a mounting claims backlog. Participants included: Mr. Derek Fronabarger, Director of Government Affairs, the Wounded Warrior Project; Mr. Matthew Doyle, Associate Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Mr. Richard Loeb, Senior Counsel for Policy, Office of the National President, American Federation of Government Employees; and Ms. Elizabeth Curda, Director of Education, Workforce and Income Security Issues, Government Accountability Office.

Subcommittee Hearing—"Stuck in Red Tape: How VA's Regulatory Policies Prevent Bad Paper Veterans From Accessing Critical Benefits"

On July 8, 2020, the Subcommittee met in open session (in-person and via Cisco Webex) to conduct an oversight hearing to examine concerns related to the way that VA processes character of discharge determinations and its impact on veterans with other than honorable (OTH) discharges ability to receive VA health care and disability benefits. The Subcommittee received testimony from two panels. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: Ms. Laurine Carson, Policy Assistant Director, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Garth G. Miller, Executive Director, Member Service, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Ms. Maureen Siedor, Legal Director, Swords to Plowshares; Ms. Dana Montalto, Attorney and Clinic Instructor, Veterans Law and Disability Benefits Clinic, Harvard Law School; and Mr. Kristofer Goldsmith, Founder and President, High Ground Veterans Advocacy.

Subcommittee Hearing—"Toxic Exposures: Examining Airborne Hazards in the Southwest Asia Theater of Military Operations"

On September 23, 2020, the Subcommittee met in open session (in-person and via Cisco Webex) to conduct an oversight hearing to examine concerns related to the status of VA's presumptive disability decision-making process. The following non-Committee Member participated at the request of the Subcommittee Chair: Representative Raul Ruiz, M.D. (California). There were two witness panels. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: Ms. Laurine Carson, Policy Assistant Director, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Patricia Hastings, Chief Consultant, Post-Deployment Health Services, Office of Patient Care Services/Public Health, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Michael J. Falvo, Scientific Director, Airborne Hazards and Burn Pits Center of Excellence, War Related Illness and Injury Study Center, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Sverre Vedal, MD, MSc, Committee Member, 2020 Report on Respiratory Health Effects of Airborne Hazards Exposure in the Southwest Asia Theater of Military Operations, Professor Emeritus, Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences, School of Public Health, University of Washington; and Dr. David A. Butler, PhD, Scholar, The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Mr. Shane Liermann, Deputy National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; and Mr. Caleb R. Stone, Esq., Professor of the Practice and Co-Director, The Lewis B. Puller, Jr. Veterans Benefits Clinic, William & Mary Law School.

Subcommittee Hearing—"The Toxic World of Presumptive Service Connection Determinations: Why Should Our Veterans Wait?"

On December 9, 2020, the Subcommittee met in open session (in-person and via Cisco Webex) to conduct an oversight hearing to examine the presumptive service connection process at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) from creation to implementation as well as explore ways that VA can create a more consistent and transparent approach to compensating toxic exposure and reducing the disability benefits denial rate for this veteran cohort. The Subcommittee received testimony from two panels. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: Ms. Beth Murphy, Executive Director, Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Laurine Carson, Deputy Executive Director, Policy & Procedures, Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Patricia Hastings, Chief Consultant, Post-Deployment Health Services, Office of Patient Care Services/Public Health, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Elizabeth Curda, Director, Education, Workforce, and Income Security, U.S. Government Accountability Office; Ms. Elizabeth Field, Director, Defense Capabilities & Management Team, U.S. Government Accountability Office; and Dr. Sverre Vedal, Professor Emeritus, Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences, University of Washington School of Public Health. The following witnesses testified on the second panel: The Honorable David Shulkin, MD, Former Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Ms. Anita Ritchie, Senior National Service Officer for Benefits and Appeals, Wounded Warrior Project.

SITE VISITS

Nashville, Tennessee. On March 19–23, 2019, majority and minority Subcommittee staff conducted a site visit and heard from stakeholders in Nashville, TN, regarding training at the National Organization of Veterans' Advocates and the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017. Additionally, Subcommittee staff assessed the Nashville Regional Benefits Office and Nashville National Cemetery to ensure compliance with regulations and law. Moreover, minority Subcommittee staff conducted oversight of the STAR facility. Majority and minority Subcommittee staff also conducted case file review of veteran's claims to identify and correct claims processing errors.

Saint Louis, Missouri. On May 1, 2019, majority and minority Subcommittee staff conducted a site visit and heard from stakeholders. The visit included a tour of the National Cemetery Scheduling Office, meetings with staff to hear their concerns and seek a better understanding of the operations of the centralized processing center for the National Cemetery Administration. Additionally, Subcommittee staff assessed the Jefferson-Barracks National Cemetery (JBNC) to ensure compliance with national standards.

Denver, Colorado. On June 10, 2019, majority Subcommittee staff conducted a site visit and heard from stakeholders. Subcommittee staff assessed the Denver Regional Benefits Office, Fort

Logan National Cemetery, and VA Medical Center to ensure compliance with regulations and law.

Janesville, Wisconsin and Chicago, Illinois. On July 8, 2019, majority Subcommittee staff conducted a site visit and heard from stakeholders at the Janesville mail scanning facility to evaluate the centralized mail intake system and the Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery to ensure compliance with regulations and law.

Seattle, Washington. On August 26, 2019, majority Subcommittee staff conducted a site visit and heard from stakeholders at the Seattle Regional Benefits Office and the satellite appeals center to ensure compliance with regulations and law.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. On September 13, 2019, majority Subcommittee staff conducted a site visit to observe contractor training and heard from stakeholders regarding the VA disability examination process.

Phoenix, Arizona. On January 21–22, 2020, minority Subcommittee staff conducted a site visit and heard from stakeholders at the Phoenix Regional Benefits Office and the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona to ensure compliance with regulations and law. Minority staff also conducted case file review of veteran's claims to identify and correct claims processing errors.

Little Rock, Arkansas. On February 18–21, 2020, minority Subcommittee staff conducted a site visit and heard from stakeholders at the Little Rock Regional Benefits Office to ensure compliance with regulations and law. Additionally, minority Subcommittee staff visited the Arkansas State Veterans Cemetery to examine the cemetery's use of the monetary grant it received under VA's Veteran's Cemetery Grant Program. Minority Subcommittee staff also conducted case file review of veteran's claims to identify and correct claims processing errors.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

MIKE LEVIN, California, *Chairman*
GUS M. BILIRAKIS, Florida, *Ranking Member*

KATHLEEN RICE, New York
ANTHONY BRINDISI, New York
CHRIS PAPPAS, New Hampshire
ELAINE G. LURIA, Virginia
SUSIE LEE, Nevada
JOE CUNNINGHAM, South Carolina

JACK BERGMAN, Michigan
JIM BANKS, Indiana
ANDY BARR, Kentucky
DANIEL MEUSER, Pennsylvania

JUSTIN VOGT, *Majority Staff Director*
JON CLARK, *Minority Staff Director*

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

Subcommittee Legislative Hearing—H.R. 95, H.R. 444, H.R. 1718, a discussion draft "To amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements to the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs with respect to flight training programs and certain other programs of education, and for other purposes," a discussion draft "Justice for Servicemembers Act," a discussion draft "To amend the United States Housing Act of 1937 and title 38, United States Code, to expand eligibility for the HUD–VASH program, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit annual reports to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives regarding homeless veterans, and for other purposes," a discussion draft "Homes for Our Heroes Act of 2019," a discussion draft "Veteran Employment and Child Care Access Act," a discussion draft "BRAVE Act," a discussion draft "To clarify seasoning requirements for certain refinanced mortgage loans, and for other purposes," a discussion draft "Navy SEAL Chief Petty Officer William "Bill" Mulder (Ret.) Transition Improvement Act," a discussion draft "VET OPP Act," a discussion draft "To amend title 38, United States Code, to adjust certain limits on the guaranteed amount of a home loan under the home loan program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes," a discussion draft "To amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements to the Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship program of the Department of Veterans Affairs," a discussion draft "To amend title 38, United States Code, to expand eligibility for the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship to children and spouses of certain members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces who die from service-connected disabilities, and for other purposes," a discussion draft "To amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the ability of veterans to receive in-state tuition using educational assistance administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs."

On April 9, 2019, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on the above legislation. The Subcommittee received testimony from one witness panel. The following witnesses testified: Ms. Margarita Devlin, Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Ashlynne Haycock, Deputy Policy Director for Education Support Services; Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS); Mr. Patrick Murray, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Mr. John Kamin, Assistant Director, Veterans Employment and Education Division; The American Legion; and Ms. Rebecca Burgess, Program Manager, the Citizenship Project, American Enterprise Institute.

Subcommittee Legislative Hearing—A discussion draft "To amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize State approving agencies to carry out outreach activities," A discussion draft "To amend title 38, United States Code, to require that educational institutions abide by Principles of Excellence as a condition of approval for purposes of the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes," A discussion draft "To amend title 38, United States Code, to require proprietary for-profit educational institutions to comply with Federal revenue limits to participate in educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs," A discussion draft "To amend title 38, United States Code, to require that certain educational institutions have letters of credit as a condition of approval for purposes of the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes," A discussion draft "Forever GI Bill Class Evaluation Act," A discussion draft "VA Economic Hardship Report Act," A discussion draft "To authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to collect overpayments of specially adapted housing assistance," H.R. 2924 "Housing for Women Veterans Act," H.R. 2227 "Gold Star Spouses and Spouses of Injured Servicemembers Leasing Relief Expansion Act of 2019," A discussion draft "Legal Services for Homeless Veterans Act," H.R. 716 "Homeless Veterans Legal Services Act," A discussion draft "GI Bill Access to Career Credentials Act," A discussion draft, "To amend title 38, United States Code, to extend the time period under which an election must be made for entitlement to educational assistance under the All-Volunteer Educational Assistance Program of Department of Veterans Affairs," H.R. 561 "Protecting Business Opportunities for Veterans Act of 2019," H.R. 1615 "Verification Alignment and Service-disabled Business Adjustment Act" or the "VA–SBA Act," H.R. 2618 "To amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to provide a guarantee of residency for registration of businesses of spouses of members of the uniformed services, to improve occupational license portability for military spouses through interstate compacts, and for other purposes," A discussion draft, "Student Veteran Empowerment Act of 2019," and A discussion draft, "To amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the monthly housing stipend under the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program for individuals who pursue programs of education solely through distance learning on more than a half-time basis."

On July 17, 2019, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on the above legislation. The Subcommittee received testimony from two witness panels. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: Ms. Charmain Bogue Executive Director, Education Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Jeffrey London,

Executive Director, Loan Guaranty Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. David Carroll, Executive Director, Mental Health Operations, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Sean Clark, National Director, Veterans Justice Programs, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Mr. Patrick Murray, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Mr. John Kamin, Assistant Director, Veterans Employment and Education Division, The American Legion; Colonel Robert F. Norton (Ret.), Senior Advisor, Veterans Education Success; Mr. William Hubbard, Chief of Staff, Student Veterans of America; Mr. Jeremy M. Villanueva, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; and Mr. Timothy "Tim" McMahon, President, Triangle Tech Group, on behalf of Career Education Colleges and Universities & Veterans for Career Education.

Subcommittee Legislative Hearing—H.R. 5052, a discussion draft "To amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for a requirement relating to the timing of the payment of educational assistance under the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes", a discussion draft "To amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship program", a discussion draft "To amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the treatment by the Department of Veterans Affairs of for-profit educational institutions converted to non-profit educational institutions," a discussion draft "To amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to collect and include certain student outcome information in the GI Bill comparison tool of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes," a discussion draft "To amend title 38, United States Code, to reduce the loan fees paid by certain veterans who have been affected by major disasters and are obtaining a new loan guaranteed, insured, or made by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes," a discussion draft "To amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the frequency of benefits under the automobile assistance program of the Department of Veterans Affairs," a discussion draft "To provide for an extended time frame for certain students to find employment following completion of Department of Veterans Affairs high technology education program, and for other purposes," a discussion draft "To provide for the eligibility of members of the Armed Forces on terminal leave for the Department of Veterans Affairs high technology education program, and for other purposes," H.R. 5761, a discussion draft "To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide electronic certificates of eligibility to persons who are entitled to educational assistance under certain educational assistance

programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs," a discussion draft "To amend title 38, United States Code, to make an individual eligible for educational assistance under chapter 33 of such title and who transfers such educational assistance to a dependent solely liable for any overpayment of such educational assistance," a discussion draft "To amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify and expand eligibility for the Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship," a discussion draft "To amend the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 to expand eligibility for high technology programs of education and the class of providers who may enter into contracts with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide such programs."

On February 6, 2020, at 10:00 a.m., the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on the above legislation. The following non-Committee Members attended this hearing: Representative Ben Ray Luján (New Mexico) and Representative Kevin McCarthy (California). The following witnesses testified: Ms. Charmain Bogue, Executive Director, Education Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Patrick Murray, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Mr. John Kamin, Assistant Director, National Veterans Employment and Education Division, The American Legion; Mr. Justin Monk, Policy Associate, Student Veterans of America; and Mr. Morgan D. Brown, National Legislative Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America.

Subcommittee Legislative Hearing—H.R. 2224, H.R. 5056, H.R. 5324, a discussion draft "To amend title 38, United States Code, to extend the period of housing assistance for students whose schools temporarily close due to natural disasters or declared emergencies," a discussion draft "To amend titles 38 and 10, United States Code, to make certain improvements to educational assistance administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and to the Transition Assistance Program and Skillbridge program of the Department of Defense," a discussion draft "To amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to reimburse a recipient of a certain grant, made by the Secretary relating to homeless veterans, the fee to use the homeless management information system," a discussion draft "To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a Native VetSuccess on Tribal Colleges and Universities Pilot Program," a discussion draft "To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct consumer testing to improve the internet website of the Department of Veterans Affairs that provides individuals with postsecondary education information," a discussion draft "To amend title 38, United States Code, and the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012, to make certain enhancements to grants and agreements be-

tween the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and entities that provide services to homeless veterans," a discussion draft "To authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Secretary of Health and Human Services to coordinate case management services for veterans receiving housing vouchers under Tribal HUD VASH program," a discussion draft "To amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the location of an educational institution conducting programs of education exclusively by distance learning for purposes of the Department of Veterans Affairs approval process," a discussion draft "To amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs repays members of the Armed Forces for certain contributions made by such members towards Post-9/11 Educational Assistance," a discussion draft "To rename the Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation Program as the Vocational Readiness and Employment Program, and for other purposes," a discussion draft "To amend title 38, United States Code, to make a technical correction to clarify that colleges and universities located outside the United States may participate in the Yellow Ribbon Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs."

On March 10, 2020, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on the above legislation. The following non-Committee Members attended this hearing: Representative Scott Peters (California) and Representative Katie Porter (California). The following witnesses testified: Ms. Charmain Bogue, Executive Director, Education Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Keith Harris, Director of Clinical Operations, Homelessness Program Office, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Frank Yoakum, Executive Director, Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States; Mr. Justin Hauschild, Legal Fellow, Student Veterans of America; and Mr. Patrick Murray, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars.

OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

Subcommittee Field Hearing—"Protecting Those Who Protect Us: Ensuring the Success of our Student Veterans"

On April 24, 2019, at Grossmont College in El Cajon, CA, the Subcommittee jointly with the Committee on Education and Labor, Higher Education and Workforce Investments (HEWI) Subcommittee held a field hearing to examine why and how student veterans can be heavily recruited by for-profit colleges and explored legislative recommendations to better protect student veterans from unscrupulous practices from some of these institutions. The following non-Committee Member attended this hearing: Representative Susan Davis (California). The following witnesses testified: Mr. Robert Muth, Academic Director, Legal Clinics, Professor in Residence, Supervision Attorney, Veterans Legal Clinic, University of San Diego School of Law; Chancellor Eloy Ortiz Oakley,

California Community Colleges; Mr. Robert Shireman, Director of Higher Education Excellence and Senior Fellow, The Century Foundation; and Ms. Kristyl Rodriguez.

Subcommittee Hearing—"Fiscal Year 2020 President's Budget: Requests Related to Veterans' Readjustment Benefits"

On April 30, 2019, the Subcommittee met in open session to examine the FY 2020 budget proposal. There were two witness panels. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: Ms. Margarita Devlin, Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Brian Davis, Director for Defense Personnel and Family Support Center, Department of Defense. The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Mr. Patrick Murray, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars on behalf of the Independent Budget; Mr. Steven Henry, Associate Legislative Director for Paralyzed Veterans of America; Mr. Jeremy Villanueva, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Larry Lohmann, Senior Legislative Associate, The American Legion; and Mr. William Hubbard, Chief of Staff, Student Veterans of America.

Subcommittee Joint Hearing—"Examining Ongoing Forever GI Bill Implementation Efforts"

On May 9, 2019, the Subcommittees on Economic Opportunity and Technology Modernization met in open session to conduct a joint oversight hearing examining VA's implementation of the Forever GI Bill and related information technology used by the Education Service of the Veterans Benefits Administration. The following witnesses testified: The Honorable Dr. Paul R. Lawrence, Under Secretary, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Charmain Bogue, Acting Executive Director, Education Services, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; The Honorable Mr. James P. Gfrerer, Assistant Secretary, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Robert Orifici, Information Technology Specialist for Architecture, Strategy, and Design, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; The Honorable Michael J. Missal, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Dr. Jay Schnitzer, Vice President, Chief Technology Officer, The MITRE Corporation.

Subcommittee Hearing—"Evaluating the Effectiveness of VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Programs"

On June 4, 2019, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing examining VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment programs. The following witnesses testified: Mr. William Streitberger, Director, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service, Veterans Benefit Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Patrick Murray, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Mr. Derek Fronabarger, Director, Legislative Affairs, The Wounded

Warrior Project; Mr. Jeremy Villanueva, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Steven Henry, Associate Legislative Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America; and Ms. Tanya Ang, Vice President, Veterans Education Success.

Subcommittee Hearing—"Examining Mid-Semester School Closures Impact on Student Veterans"

On June 19, 2019, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing examining how school closures were impacting student veterans receiving education benefits. The following witnesses testified: Ms. Charmain Bogue, Acting Executive Director, Education Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Ms. Robin Minor, Deputy Chief Operating Officer for Partner Participation and Oversight, Federal Student Aid, U.S. Department of Education; Ms. Melissa Emrey-Arras, Director for Education, Workforce and Income Security, U.S. Government Accountability Office; and Mr. Joseph Wescott II, Ed.D., National Legislative Liaison, National Association of State Approving Agencies.

Subcommittee Hearing—"Economic Well-Being of Women Veterans"

On July 10, 2019, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing examining economic issues impacting women veterans. The following witnesses testified: Ms. Lauren Augustine, Vice President of Government Affairs, Student Veterans of America; Mrs. Maureen Casey, J.D., Chief Operating Officer, Institute for Veterans and Military Families, Syracuse University; Ms. Jas Boothe, Founder, Final Salute, Inc; Ms. Christine Schwartz, Chief Executive Officer, Service to School; and Ms. Jodie Grenier, Chief Executive Officer, Foundation for Women Warriors.

Subcommittee Field Hearing—"Housing our Heroes: Addressing the Veteran Homelessness Crisis"

On August 22, 2019, at the North County Coastal Military & Veterans Affairs Resource Center in Oceanside, CA, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct a field hearing to examine policy issues related to veteran homelessness such as risk factors, improvements to programs VA and the Department of Housing and Urban Development, unique challenges faced by women veterans, and additional challenges homeless veterans face in areas such as nutrition, the criminal justice system, health care, and employment. The following non-Committee Member attended this hearing: Rep. Scott Peters (California). There were two witness panels for this hearing. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: Dr. Robert Smith, Director of the San Diego VA Health Care System, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. R. "Hunter" Kurtz, Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; Mr. Nathan Fletcher, Supervisor, San Diego County; and Ms. Ginny Puddefoot, Executive Officer, California Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council. The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Mr. Ron Stark, President, San Diego Veteran's Coalition; Ms. Kimberly Mitchell, President and

CEO, Veterans Village of San Diego; Mr. Matt Schillingburg, Commander, American Legion Post 146; Mr. Greg Anglea, Chief Executive Officer, Interfaith Community Services; and Ms. Tamera Kohler, Chief Executive Officer, San Diego Regional Task Force on the Homeless.

Subcommittee Field Hearing—"Combating Veteran Homelessness in the Tampa Bay Area"

On September 16, 2019, at the West Pasco Government Center in New Port Richey, FL, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct a field hearing examining efforts by Federal, state, and local governments to partner with community providers to reduce homelessness among veterans. The hearing explored best practices that are being used in the Tampa Bay area to help homeless veterans and look for ways to improve all programs to end veteran homelessness. The following non-Committee Member attended this hearing: Representative Ross Spano (Florida). The following witnesses testified: Mr. Joe D. Battle, Director, James A. Haley Veterans' Medical Center, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Danny Burgess, Executive Director, Florida Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. David Lambert, Chairman, the Pasco County Housing Authority; Mr. Michael Raposa, Chief Executive Officer, St. Vincent DePaul CARES; Mr. Brian Anderson, Founder and CEO of Veterans Alternative; and Ms. Mary White, U.S., Army veteran.

Subcommittee Hearing—"Protecting Benefits for All Servicemembers"

On October 23, 2019, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing examining issues related to the change of the Armed Forces' reserve components from a strategic reserve to an operational reserve; including examining the lack of parity for military service, if service hinders civilian careers, and whether transition programs are sufficient for Guard and Reserve servicemembers. The following witnesses testified: Major General Dawne Deskins, Director, Manpower and Personnel, National Guard Bureau; Major General Michael C. O'Guinn, Deputy Chief, U.S. Army Reserve; Mr. Daniel Elkins, Legislative Director, Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States; Mr. J. Roy Robinson, President, the National Guard Association of the United States; and Ms. Susan Lukas, Director, Legislation and Military Policy, Reserve Officer Association of the United States.

Subcommittee Hearing—"Examining Ongoing Forever GI Bill Implementation Efforts"

On November 19, 2019, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing examining VA's continued efforts to implement the Forever GI Bill. The following witnesses testified: The Honorable Dr. Paul R. Lawrence, Under Secretary, Veterans Benefits Administration. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Charmain Bogue, Executive Director, Education Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; The Honorable Mr. James P. Gfrerer, Assistant Secretary, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs;

Mr. Robert Orifici, Information Technology Specialist for Architecture, Strategy, and Design, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Dr. Jay Schnitzer, Vice President & Chief Technology Officer, the MITRE Corporation.

Subcommittee Hearing—"Reviewing the Availability of Resources to Address Veteran Hunger"

On January 9, 2020, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct an oversight to examine veteran food insecurity. The following witnesses testified: Dr. Thomas O'Toole, Senior Medical Advisor, Providence VA Medical Center, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Christine Going, MPA, RD, FACHE, Co-Chairperson, Veterans Heath Affairs Ensuring Veterans Food Security Workgroup, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Ms. Pamilyn "Pam" Miller, Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Mr. Josh Protas, Vice President of Public Policy, Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger; Ms. Denise Hollywood, Chief Community & Programs Officer, Blue Star Families; and Mr. Vince Hall, CEO, Feeding San Diego, Community & Programs Officer.

Subcommittee Hearing—"Making HUD–VASH Work for all Veteran Communities"

On January 14, 2020, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing examining access to HUD–VASH in urban, suburban, rural, and tribal communities and work to determine where bottlenecks exist in delivering resources in communities of all sizes. There were two witness panels. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: Dr. Keith Harris, National Director of Clinical Operations, VA Homeless Program Office, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. R. "Hunter" Kurtz, Assistant Secretary of Public and Indian Housing, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Mr. Steve Berg, Vice President for Programs and Policy, National Alliance to End Homelessness; Ms. Kathryn Monet, Chief Executive Officer, National Coalition for Homeless Veterans; Mr. Greg Anglea, Chief Executive Officer at Interfaith Community Services; Ms. Tamera Kohler, Chief Executive Officer, San Diego's Regional Task Force on the Homeless; and Mr. Gary Cooper, Chairman of the Board of Directors, National American Indian Housing Council, and Executive Director, Housing Authority of the Cherokee Nation.

Subcommittee Roundtable—"Discussion with VA Loan Guaranty Service on the State of the Market and Steps Ahead"

On May 14, 2020, the Subcommittee held a public roundtable to allow the VA Loan Guaranty Service to share information regarding the impact of COVID–19 on veterans' home loans and implementation of the CARES Act. Presenting was Mr. Jeffrey London, MPA, Executive Director, Loan Guaranty Service, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Subcommittee Hearing—"Getting Veterans Back to Work After COVID–19"

On July 21, 2020, the Subcommittee met in open session (in-person and via Cisco Webex) to conduct an oversight hearing examining federal education and employment programs, along with private and local initiatives to address unemployment caused by COVID–19. There were two witness panels. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: Ms. Margarita Devlin, Principal Undersecretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Charmain Bogue, Executive Director, Education Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs; and Mr. John Lowry, Assistant Secretary, Veterans' Employment & Training Service, U.S. Department of Labor. The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Mr. David Porter, Executive Director, Helmets To Hardhats; Mr. Eric Eversole, President, Hiring our Heroes, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation; and Mr. Maurice D. Wilson, President, National Veterans Transition Services, Inc. also known as Reboot.

Subcommittee Hearing—"Coordinating Transition Resources"

On August 28, 2020, the Subcommittee met in an open session (via Cisco WebEx) to conduct an oversight hearing examining thegaps in coordination and opportunities for synergy among the plethora of resources available to veterans through VA and other federal and nongovernmental entities. The following witnesses testified: Mr. Ray Flores, Executive Director, San Diego Veterans Coalition, Office of Military and Veterans Affairs, County of San Diego Health & Human Services Agency; Mr. Daniel Romero, Senior Program Director, SAY San Diego; Brigadier General Paul Lebidine (Ret.), Director, M.Dyer Global; and Mr. Brian Anderson, Founder and CEO, Veterans Alternative.

Subcommittee Hearing—"Identifying Congressional and Administration Priorities for the Next Congress: How we can support our Veterans through and after COVID–19"

On December 8, 2020, the Subcommittee met in open session (via Cisco WebEx) to conduct an oversight hearing examining outstanding veterans' economic priorities for the new Congress and Administration, as the 116th Congress wraps up work and begins transition to the 117th Congress in the midst of the COVID–19 pandemic. The following witnesses testified: Mr. Pat Murray, Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Mr. John Kamin, Assistant Director, Veterans Employment & Education Division, the American Legion; Ms. Maureen Elias, Associate Legislative Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Ms. Ashlynne Haycock, Deputy Director, Policy, Tragedy Assistance Program For Survivors; Mr. Victor LaGroon, Director, Black Veteran Empowerment Council; Ms. Lauren Augustine, Vice President of Government Affairs, Student Veterans of America; and Ms. Tanya Ang, Vice President, Veterans Education Success.

SITE VISITS

Orlando, Florida, Student Veterans of America National Conference. On January 3–6, 2019, the majority and minority staff of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee traveled to Orlando, FL. Personnel from the Senate Veterans' Affairs also attended the National Conference. The majority Subcommittee staff met with Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment staff and the majority and minority staff members participated in a Congressional Panel at the Student Veterans of America National Conference. Chairman Takano joined the trip on January 5 and visited VA's Lake Nova Medical Center. The Chairman also spoke at the Student Veterans of America National Conference.

Oakland, California, VA Regional Office. On July 11, 2019, the majority Economic Opportunity Subcommittee staff visited the VA Oakland Regional Office. The Subcommittee staff met with Regional Office Leadership, Veteran Service Organizations, union representation, and front-line staff. The Subcommittee staff spoke with Vocational Rehabilitation supervisors and counselors.

Indianapolis, Indiana, VA Regional Office. On July 19, 2019, the majority Economic Opportunity Subcommittee staff visited the VA Indianapolis Regional Office. The Subcommittee met with Regional Office Leadership, Veteran Service Organizations, union representation, and front-line staff. The Subcommittee spoke with Vocational Rehabilitation supervisors and counselors.

Naples, Italy, Ramstein, Germany, Wiesbaden, Germany (NSA Naples, Ramstein AB, USAG Clay Kaserne). On August 4–9, 2019, majority and minority staff of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees were accompanied by Senate Armed Services Committee staff, and traveled to Germany and Italy to conduct congressional oversight of OCONUS TAP at Army, Air Force, and Navy bases. The delegation gathered information on the transition process for service members and learn about the difficulties for service members and families transitioning out of the military from overseas posts.

Louisville, Kentucky, U.S. Army Conference for TAP. On August 12–16, 2019, the majority staff of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee traveled to Louisville, KY to observe the U.S. Army conference for Transition Assistance Program personnel in preparation for the implementation of new requirements related to transition in the Fiscal Year 2019 National Defense Authorization Act. Personnel from minority and the Senate Veterans' Affairs also attended the U.S. Army Conference for TAP. While in Louisville, the Subcommittee staff visited the VA Louisville Regional Office. The Subcommittee staff met with Regional Office Leadership, Veteran Service Organizations, union representation, and front-line staff. The Subcommittee staff spoke with Vocational Rehabilitation supervisors and counselors.

San Diego, California (NBSD, USCG San Diego, MCAS Miramar, MCB Camp Pendleton). On August 19–21, 2019 the majority and minority staff of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee traveled to visit Naval Base San Diego, Camp Pendleton, MCAS Miramar and Coast Guard assets to provide congressional oversight on transition and education programs on these installations.

Denver, Colorado, National Guard convention. On August 30–September 2, 2019, the majority staff of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee traveled to Denver, CO to observe the National Guard Association of the United States annual convention. The Subcommittee staff met with senior National Guard Bureau personnel and state Adjutants General to discuss the impact of the reserve component becoming an operational reserve on benefits and employment for National Guard personnel. While in Denver, the Subcommittee staff visited the VA Denver Regional Office. The Subcommittee staff met with Regional Office Leadership, Veteran Service Organizations, union representation, and front-line staff. The Subcommittee staff spoke with Vocational Rehabilitation supervisors and counselors.

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, NAVPA Annual Conference. On October 14–16, 2019, the majority Economic Opportunity Subcommittee traveled to Oklahoma City, OK to participate and observe the National Association of Veterans' Program Administrators (NAVPA) annual training and conference. Personnel from minority and the Senate Veterans' Affairs also attended NAVPA's Annual Conference. The Subcommittee staff sat on a panel during the conference and briefed the conference attendees on the legislative priorities of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee in the 116th Congress. The Subcommittee staff met NAVPA leadership and a number school certifying officials to discuss issues that schools are experiencing when implementing the Forever GI Bill. The Subcommittee also met VSOs to discuss education policy for veterans.

Muskogee, Oklahoma, VA Regional Office. On October 17, 2019, the majority and minority staff of Economic Opportunity Subcommittee visited the VA Muskogee Regional Office. The Subcommittee met with Regional Office Leadership, Veteran Service Organizations, union representation, and front-line staff. The Subcommittee spoke with regional office staff about educational claims processing.

Killeen, Ft. Hood, Texas. On October 18, 2019, the majority staff of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee visited Ft. Hood, TX to conduct oversight of the implementation of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP). The Subcommittee staff met with base leadership at Ft. Hood to discuss the TAP program and resources for the Reservist and National Guard servicemembers who mobilize and demobilize through Ft. Hood.

Austin, Camp Mabry and Futures Command, Texas. On October 21, 2019, the majority staff of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee visited Camp Mabry, TX to meet with the Texas National Guard leadership to discuss benefit parity between service components. The Subcommittee staff met with the leadership of Futures Command to discuss to veteran entrepreneurship and opportunities for veterans to work with the Futures Command.

Muskogee, Oklahoma VA Regional Office. On October 31–November 1, 2019, the staff of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee and Chairman Levin visited the Muskogee VA Regional Office to conduct oversight on the implementation of section 107 and 501 of the Forever GI Bill. Chairman Levin and Subcommittee staff met VA Undersecretary of Benefits Dr. Paul Lawrence, regional office leadership, and front-line staff. Chairman Levin and Subcommittee

toured the educational processing and call center of the regional office.

Buffalo, New York, VA Regional Office. On November 21, 2019, the majority and minority staff of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee staff visited the Buffalo, NY VA Regional Office to conduct oversight on the implementation of section 107 and 501 of the Forever GI Bill, along with program updates of VET TEC and the Edith Nourse Rogers Science Technology Engineering Math (STEM) Scholarship. In addition, the Subcommittee discussed overall needs for the site and nationwide to implement needed technology upgrades. The Subcommittee staff also met with AFGE to discuss labor relations at the site.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH

JULIA BROWNLEY, California, *Chairwoman*
NEAL DUNN, M.D., Florida, *Ranking Member*

CONOR LAMB, Pennsylvania
MIKE LEVIN, California
ANTHONY BRINDISI, New York
MAX ROSE, New York
GILBERT CISNEROS, California
GREGORIO KILILI SABLAN, Northern Mariana Islands
AMATA COLEMAN RADEWAGEN, American Samoa
ANDY BARR, Kentucky
DAN MEUSER, Pennsylvania
W. GREGORY STEUBE, Florida

ELIZABETH MACKENZIE, *Majority Staff Director*
CHRISTINE HILL, *Minority Staff Director*

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

Subcommittee Legislative Hearing—"H.R. 712, H.R 2333, H.R. 2359, H.R. 2372, H.R. 2340, H.R. 1647, H.R. 2191, and H.R. 100"

On April 30, 2019, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on the above legislation. The hearing included two panels. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: Representative Earl Blumenauer (Oregon), Representative Anthony Brindisi (New York), Representative Lou Correa (California), Representative Conor Lamb (Pennsylvania), Representative Max Rose (New York), and Representative W. Gregory Steube (Florida). The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Dr. Keita Franklin, Ph.D., National Director of Suicide Prevention, Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Tracy Gaudet, Director, Office of Patient Centered Care, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Dr. Larry Mole, Chief Consultant Population Health, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Joy Ilem, National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Carlos Fuentes, Director National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Ms. Stephanie Mullen, Research Director, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America.

Subcommittee Legislative Hearing—"H.R. 1163, H.R. 1527, H.R. 2628, H.R. 2645, H.R. 2681, H.R. 2752, H.R. 2798, H.R. 2816, H.R. 2972, H.R. 2982, H.R. 3036, H.R. 3224, H.R. 3636, H.R. 3798, H.R. 3867, H.R. 4096, and a draft bill to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs the Office of Women's Health, and for other purposes"

On September 11, 2019, the Subcommittee met in open session and held a legislative hearing on the above legislation. The hearing included two panels. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: Dr. Teresa Boyd, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Clinical Operations, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Patricia Hayes, Chief Consultant, Office of Women's Health Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Dr. David Carroll, Executive Director, Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Mr. Jeremy Butler, Chief Executive Officer, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; Mr. Roscoe Butler, Associate Legislative Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America; and Ms. Joy Ilem, National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans.

OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

Subcommittee Hearing—"Cultural Barriers Impacting Women Veterans' Access to Healthcare"

On May 2, 2019, the Subcommittee, in coordination with the Women Veterans Task Force, met in open session and held an oversight hearing to examine cultural barriers that impact women

veterans' access to care. The hearing included two witness panels. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: Ms. Joy Ilem, National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Ms. Lindsay Church, CEO, Minority Veterans of America; Ms. Ginger Miller, President and CEO of Women Veterans Interactive; Ms. BriGette McCoy, CEO and Founder, Women Veteran Social Justice Network; Ms. Lory Manning, Director of Government Relations, Service Women's Action Network; Ms. Ellen Haring, CEO, Service Women's Action Network. The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Dr. Patricia Hayes, Chief Consultant for Women's Health Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Subcommittee Joint Hearing—"Military and Veteran Suicide: Understanding the Problem and Preparing for the Future"

On May 21, 2019, the Subcommittee held a joint hearing with the Subcommittee on Military Personnel of the House Armed Services Committee to examine actions that can be taken to reduce suicides among active duty service members, reserve component service members, the National Guard, and veterans. The following witnesses testified: Dr. Elizabeth P. Van Winkle, Executive Director, Office of Force Resiliency, U.S. Department of Defense; Captain Mike Colston, M.D., USN, Director, Mental Health Policy and Oversight, U.S. Department of Defense; Dr. Keita Franklin, National Director of Suicide Prevention, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Michael Fisher, Chief Readjustment Counseling Officer, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Subcommittee Joint Hearing—"MISSION Critical: Caring for Our Heroes"

On May 22, 2019, the Subcommittees on Health and Technology Modernization met in open session to conduct a joint hearing to examine the delayed implementation of the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) at VA, including multiple failed efforts to develop an eligibility tool and management system. The hearing included two witness panels. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: Dr. Steven Lieberman, Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Elyse Kaplan, Deputy Director, Caregiver Support Program, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Alan Constantian, Deputy Chief Information Officer, Account Management, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Carol Harris, Director for Information Technology Acquisition Management, U.S. Government Accountability Office. The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Dr. Wendell Ocasio, Chief Medical Officer, AbleVets; and Mr. Ken Beecher, Director of Acumen Solutions.

Subcommittee Hearing—"Mission Readiness: VA's Emergency Response and Cache Program"

On June 19, 2019, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing examining the findings of the IG's report from October 31, 2018, *Emergency Cache Program: Ineffective Management Impairs Mission Readiness* that determined the Veterans Health Administration is not maintaining its Emergency Cache Program in a mission-ready status. This hearing also assessed the readiness of the Office of Emergency Management and Emergency Pharmacy Service to adequately coordinate and resource responses as the frequency of extreme weather events increases. The following witnesses testified: Mr. Larry Reinkemeyer, Assistant Inspector General for Audits and Evaluations, Office of the Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Paul Kim, Director, Office of Emergency Management, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Larry Mole, Chief Consultant for Population Health Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Dr. Steven Steinwandt, Director of Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacy, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Subcommittee Hearing—"Beyond the Million Veteran Program: Barriers to Precision Medicine"

On June 26, 2019, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing examining the intersection of VA's research mission and the promise of precision medicine. The following witnesses testified: Dr. Carolyn Clancy, Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Discovery, Education, and Affiliated Networks, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Rachel Ramoni, Chief Research and Development Officer, Office of Research and Development, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Sumitra Muralidhar, Director of the Million Veteran Program, Office of Research and Development, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Matt Kuntz, Executive Director, National Alliance on Mental Illness—Montana; and Dr. Magali Haas, Chief Executive Officer and President, Cohen Veterans Bioscience and Member of the Coalition to Heal Invisible Wounds.

Subcommittee Hearing—"MISSION Critical: Care in the Community Update"

On September 23, 2019, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing to examine the first 90 days of implementation of the Veterans Community Care Program and the urgent care benefit that were created under the MISSION Act. The Subcommittee discussed status of program implementation, what challenges were overcome, and what difficulties, if any, remained. The hearing included two witness panels. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: Dr. Richard Stone, Executive in Charge, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Kameron Matthews, Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Community Care, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Dr. Jennifer MacDonald, MISSION Act Lead, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department

of Veterans Affairs. The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Ms. Sharon Vitti, President, CVS MinuteClinic and Senior Vice President, CVS Health; Mr. David J. McIntyre, President and Chief Executive Officer, TriWest Healthcare Alliance, Inc.; and Lt. General Patty Horoho, Chief Executive Officer, OptumServe.

Subcommittee Hearing—"Native Veterans' Access to Care"

On October 30, 2019, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing to examine barriers to healthcare experienced by Native veterans. The hearing included two witness panels. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: Andrew C. Joseph Jr., Chairman, Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board; Kevin J. Allis, President, National Congress of American Indians; Chief William Smith, Vice Chairperson, Alaska Native Health Board; Sonya M. Tetnowski, CEO, National Council on Urban Indian Health; Chief Marilynn Malerba, Mohegan Tribe of Connecticut and the Indian Health Service Tribal Self-Governance Advisory Committee. The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Dr. Kameron Matthews, Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Community Care, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs; Dr. Thomas Klobuchar, Executive Director of the Office of Rural Health, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Benjamin Smith, Deputy Director for Intergovernmental Affairs, Indian Health Service.

Subcommittee Hearing—"Achieving Health Equity for America's Minority Veterans"

On February 11, 2020, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing to examine systemic barriers experienced by underserved minority veteran communities. The hearing included two witness panels. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: Dr. Carolyn Clancy, Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Discovery, Education and Affiliate Networks, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Ernest Moy, Executive Director, Office of Health Equity, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Dr. Donna Washington, Attending Physician, VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Ms. Kayla Williams, Senior Fellow and Military, Veterans, and Society Program Director, Center for a New American Security; and Melissa Bryant, Legislative Director, The American Legion.

Subcommittee Joint Hearing—"Mission Critical: Examining Provider Relations During the Transition to VA's New Community Care Program"

On February 12, 2020, the Subcommittee on Health, jointly with the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, met in open session and held a hearing to examine provider relations during the transition to the Veterans Community Care Program created under the MISSION Act. The following witnesses testified: Dr. Kameron Matthews, Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Com-

munity Care, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; David J. McIntyre, President and Chief Executive Officer, TriWest Healthcare Alliance, Inc.; Lieutenant General (Ret.) Patricia D. Horoho, Chief Executive Officer, OptumServe, Inc.; William A. Dombi, President, National Association of Home Care & Hospice; Erik L. Golnick, Co-Founder and CEO, Veteran & First Responder Healthcare; and Eric Frieman, Co-Founder, Veteran & First Responder Healthcare.

Subcommittee Hearing—"The Silver Tsunami: is VA Ready?"

On March 3, 2020, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing to examine VA's ability to meet the long-term care needs of a large and diverse cohort of aging veterans at home and in institutional settings. The hearing included two witness panels. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: Dr. Teresa Boyd, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Clinical Operations, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Beth Taylor, Chief Nursing Officer, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Scotte Hartronft, Executive Director, Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Elyse Kaplan, Deputy Director of the Caregiver Support Program, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Nikki Clowers, Managing Director of Health Care, U.S. Government Accountability Office; and Ms. Karin Wallestad, Assistant Director of Health Care, U.S. Government Accountability Office. The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Mr. Adrian Atizado, Deputy National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; and Mr. Mark Bowman, President, National Association of State Veterans Homes.

Subcommittee Hearing—"Mission Readiness: VA's Preparedness for Natural Disasters During a Pandemic"

On June 3, 2020, the Subcommittee met in open session via Cisco Webex to conduct a fully remote oversight hearing to examine what specific planning, training, and interagency coordination VA has conducted to ensure an adequately enabled response to a natural disaster during the COVID–19 pandemic. The following witnesses testified at the hearing: Mr. Daniel Sitterly, Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration/Operations, Security, and Preparedness, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Tammy Czarnecki, Deputy Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Operations, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Deborah Kramer, Acting Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Support Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Dr. Larry Mole, Executive Director of the Office of Public Health, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Subcommittee Hearing—"Veterans" Access to Reproductive Health"

On July 1, 2020, the Subcommittee met in open session (in-person and via Cisco Webex) to conduct an oversight hearing examining the full spectrum of reproductive health access within VA.

Specifically, the Subcommittee discussed contraception access, prenatal and maternity care, infertility treatment and resources, as well as services currently not available by regulation or statute at VA. In addition, this hearing examined the continuity of care during major disruptions such as natural disasters and pandemics. The following witnesses testified at the hearing: Dr. Patricia Hayes, Chief Officer, Women's Health Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Alicia Christy, Deputy Director of Reproductive Health, Office of Women's Health Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mrs. Maureen Elias, Associate Legislative Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America; and Ms. Kayla Williams, Senior Fellow and Director, Military Veterans and Society Program, Center for a New American Security.

Subcommittee Hearing—"Who's in Charge? Examining Oversight of State Veterans Homes During the COVID–19 Pandemic"

On July 29, 2020, the Subcommittee met in open session (in-person and via Cisco Webex) to conduct an oversight hearing examining numerous issues related to quality of care and infection control practices at State Veterans Homes during the COVID–19 pandemic, including the scope of VA's existing State Veterans Home inspections and the extent to which VA holds State Veterans Homes accountable for correcting identified deficiencies; the extent to which VA has engaged in continuous oversight and proactive outreach to State Veterans Homes during the pandemic; and Fourth Mission assistance VA has provided to State Veteran Homes during the national public health emergency. In light of several serious COVID–19 outbreaks that occurred at State Veterans Homes in or near their districts, several members accepted the Chairwoman's invitation to participate in this hearing: Representative Richard Neal (Massachusetts), Representative Joseph Kennedy III (Massachusetts) (remote attendance), Representative Josh Gottheimer (New Jersey), and Representative Chrissy Houlahan (Pennsylvania). The following witness testified at the hearing: Mr. Paul Barabani, Member, Holyoke Soldiers' Home Coalition (remote attendance); Ms. Sharon Silas, Director, Health Care, U.S. Government Accountability Office (remote attendance); Ms. Melissa Jackson, President, National Association of State Veterans Homes; Dr. Teresa Boyd, Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Clinical Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs; Dr. Beth Taylor, Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Patient Care Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Scotte Hartronft, Executive Director, Office of Geriatrics & Extended Care, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (remote attendance); and Mr. Ryan Lilly, Director, VA New England Health Care System, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (remote attendance).

Subcommittee Hearing—"MISSION Critical: Assessing Community Care Wait Times"

On September 30, 2020, the Subcommittee met in open session (in-person and via Cisco Webex) to conduct an oversight hearing examining the timeliness of veterans' access to VA community care since the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) implemented the Veterans Community Care Program authorized by the MISSION Act. During the hearing, the Subcommittee evaluated the extent to which VA has met the goals of delivering timely care to veterans, the appointment scheduling process established for staff within VA medical facilities to coordinate veterans' community care, what is currently known about VA wait times since the implementation of the MISSION Act, and the extent to which VA incorporated lessons learned from the Veterans Choice Program into the current community care program. The following witnesses testified at the hearing: Mr. Roscoe Butler, Associate Legislative Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America (remote attendance); Ms. Joy Ilem, National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans (remote attendance); Mr. Patrick Murray, Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars (remote attendance); Ms. Sharon Silas, Director, Health Care, U.S. Government Accountability Office (remote attendance); Dr. Steven Liberman, Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Mark Upton, Acting Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Community Care, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Dr. Jennifer MacDonald, Chief Consultant to the Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. David McIntyre, President and Chief Executive Officer, TriWest Healthcare Alliance, Inc. (remote attendance).

SITE VISITS

New Orleans, Louisiana. On April 12, 2019, majority Subcommittee staff traveled to New Orleans, LA, to conduct oversight at the Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System to learn more about the progress of VA to meet the healthcare needs of transgender veterans. The New Orleans VAMC has become a leader in the VA system in meeting the medical and cultural needs of LGBT patients despite certain regulatory barriers prohibiting VA from offering fully comprehensive care.

Phoenix VA Medical Center. On April 20, 2019, majority Subcommittee staff traveled to conduct oversight of the Phoenix, Arizona Veterans Affairs Medical Center, focusing on the facility's outreach to the veterans at risk of suicide, as well as the unique services the facility offers to women veterans.

Oxnard, California. On April 22, 2019, majority Subcommittee staff traveled to Southern California to conduct oversight at the following VA medical facilities: VA Oxnard Community Based Outpatient Center, Sepulveda VA Ambulatory Medical Center, and West Los Angeles VA Medical Center. The purpose was to visit the women's health centers, examine suicide prevention efforts, and see preparations for the implementation of the MISSION Act.

San Juan, Puerto Rico. On June 6, 2019, majority Subcommittee staff traveled to the San Juan, Puerto Rico VA Medical Center, to conduct oversight on the implementation of the MISSION Act and to discuss disaster preparedness and recovery in the two years since Hurricane Maria devastated the Caribbean.

Detroit, Michigan. On June 5–6, 2019, majority Subcommittee staff traveled to Detroit, Michigan, to conduct oversight of the John D. Dingell Veterans Affairs Medical Center; The visit focused on witnessing the roll-out of new Veterans Community Care Program created under the MISSION Act.

West Palm Beach VA Medical Center. On June 6, 2019, majority Subcommittee staff traveled to the West Palm Beach Veterans Affairs Medical Center to conduct oversight of the roll-out of new Veterans Community Care Program created under the MISSION Act.

Nashville VA Medical Center. On June 6, 2019, minority Subcommittee staff traveled to the Nashville Veterans Affairs Medical Center to conduct oversight of the roll-out of the new Veterans Community Care Program created under the MISSION Act.

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. On June 10, 2019, majority Subcommittee staff conducted oversight at the Oklahoma City VA Medical Center to observe VA's execution of its Fourth Mission in response to flooding and extreme weather storms that have prompted states of emergencies for half the population and displaced thousands. Oversight was also conducted on the rollout of the MISSION Act and how VA is coordinating quality care amid ongoing natural disasters. Of immediate concern was how VA is preventing the fracturing of care and loss of critical records when community providers' practices are destroyed, closed for months, or relocated.

US Virgin Islands. On July 19–20, 2019, majority Subcommittee staff conducted oversight of the VA operations in the U.S. Virgin Islands, focusing on the unique healthcare challenges for veterans living in regions most acutely impacted by climate change and to see how VA is or is not serving its Fourth Mission and what resources, policy changes, and procedures are needed for mission readiness in these at-risk regions.

Anchorage, Alaska. On July 29–Aug 2, 2019, majority Subcommittee staff conducted an oversight trip to Anchorage and Fairbanks VAMCs, and held meetings with active-duty servicewomen on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, meetings with Alaska state leadership and women veterans community leaders to learn of women veterans' health resources at VA and community-based resources supporting women veterans.

Helena, Montana. On August 12–16, 2019, majority and minority Subcommittee staff conducted oversight of multiple rural VA clinics in western Montana to assess implementation of the MISSION Act, unmet needs, and the unique needs of veterans in medically underserved communities.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. On August 27, 2019, majority Subcommittee staff traveled to the Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center to conduct oversight and discuss the roll-out of new Community Care Program created under the MISSION Act.

Atlanta, Georgia. On September 5–6, 2019, majority and minority staff participated in the Warrior Community Integration Sym-

posium and hosted a panel focused on legislation and Hill priorities.

Northern Virginia. On September 5, 2019, majority Subcommittee staff of the Subcommittees on Health and Oversight and Investigations traveled to Urgent Care sites in Northern Virginia.

Franklin, Tennessee. On September 28, 2019, majority Subcommittee staff visited Franklin, TN, to conduct oversight on an organization listed as a partner with VA for the purpose of reducing veteran suicide.

Nashville, Tennessee. On September 30, 2019, majority Subcommittee staff conducted oversight of the Nashville Veterans Affairs Medical Center, focusing on the facility's implementation of the Community Care Network created through the MISSION Act.

Memphis, Tennessee. On October 2–3, 2019, majority and minority Subcommittee staff conducted oversight of the Memphis Veterans Affairs Medical Center, focusing on the facility's implementation of the Community Care Network created through the MISSION Act and improvements as part of VA's SAIL program.

Charlotte, North Carolina. On October 7, 2019, majority Subcommittee staff held meetings in Charlotte, North Carolina for the purpose of designing legislation to support veterans within the communities where they live.

Greenville, South Carolina. On October 8, 2019, majority Subcommittee staff held meetings in Greenville, South Carolina for the purpose of designing legislation to support veterans within the communities where they live.

Syracuse, New York. On October 18, 2019, majority Subcommittee staff held meetings in Syracuse, New York, for the purpose of understanding the application of a collective impact model for suicide prevention.

Miami, Florida. On October 23, 2019, majority and minority Subcommittee staff visited Miami, FL to participate in the annual conference and speak on a legislative update panel to members of Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs.

U.S. Virgin Islands. November 4–8, 2019, majority Subcommittee staff conducted oversight of the VA operations in the U.S. Virgin Islands, focusing on the region's implementation of the Community Care Network created through the MISSION Act.

Cheyenne River Sioux Indian Reservation and Standing Rock Sioux Indian Reservation. On January 23–26, 2020, majority and minority Subcommittee staff visited tribal governments who have established MOUs with VA, to tour health facilities reimbursed by VA, and to learn from tribal members how to improve care.

Martinsburg, West Virginia. On March 6, 2020, majority Subcommittee staff visited the Martinsburg VA to conduct oversight of the roll-out of new Community Care Program created under the MISSION Act.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

CHRIS PAPPAS, New Hampshire, *Chairman*
JACK BERGMAN, Michigan, *Ranking Member*

KATHLEEN RICE, New York
MAX ROSE, New York
GILBERT CISNEROS, California
COLLIN PETERSON, Minnesota
AMATA COLEMAN RADEWAGEN, American Samoa
MIKE BOST, Illinois
CHIP ROY, Texas

PETER TYLER, *Majority Staff Director*
CHRISTOPHER MCNAMEE, *Minority Staff Director*

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

Subcommittee Legislative Hearing—"H.R. 1133; H.R. 4949; H.R. 5245; H.R. 5843; and a draft bill to align the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Chief Financial Officer's authority with federal law"

On March 10, 2020, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct a legislative hearing on the above legislation. The hearing included two panels. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: The Honorable Jon Rychalski, Assistant Secretary for Management and Chief Financial Officer, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Christopher Wilber, Counselor to the Inspector General, Office of the Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Shane Liermann, Deputy National Legislative Director for Benefits, Disabled American Veterans; and Mr. Michael Figlioli, Deputy Director, National Veterans Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars. The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Ms. Jessica Bonjorni, Acting Assistant Deputy Undersecretary for Health for Workforce Services, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; and Ms. Kathleen Pachomski, President of Local 3930, American Federation of Government Employees.

OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

Subcommittee Hearing—Improving the Department of Veterans Affairs' Effectiveness: Responding to Recommendations from Oversight Agencies

On May 22, 2019, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing to examine VA's progress in addressing the major management challenges and priority recommendations identified by the IG and GAO. The following witnesses testified: The Honorable Gene Dodaro, Comptroller General of the United States; and The Honorable Michael Missal, Inspector General, Department of Veterans Affairs.

Subcommittee Hearing—Examining VA's Police Force

On June 11, 2019, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing examining the policies, operations, and management of the VA police force, specifically outlined in the 2019 IG Report. The following witnesses testified: The Honorable Michael Missal, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Renee Oshinksi, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Kevin T. Hanretta, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Operations, Security, and Preparedness, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Frederick Jackson, Director of the Office of Security and Law Enforcement, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Subcommittee Hearing—Learning from Whistleblowers at the Department of Veterans Affairs

On June 25, 2019, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing to examine the challenges faced by VA

whistleblowers. This hearing focused on testimony provided by VA Whistleblowers, and recommendations made by oversight organizations. The hearing included three panels of witnesses. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: Dr. Katherine Mitchell, VA Whistleblower; Dr. Minu Aghevli, VA Whistleblower; and Mr. Jeff Dettbarn, VA Whistleblower. The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Ms. Rebecca Jones, Policy Counsel, Project On Government Oversight; Mr. Tom Devine, Legal Director, Government Accountability Project; and Ms. Jacqueline Garrick, Founder, Whistleblowers of America.

The June 25, 2019, hearing was recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reconvened on July 23, 2019, to hear from the third panel. The following witnesses testified on the third panel: Dr. Tamara Bonzanto, Assistant Secretary for Accountability and Whistleblower Protection, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; The Honorable Michael Missal, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; The Honorable Henry Kerner, Special Counsel, Office of Special Counsel; Mr. Tristan Leavitt, General Counsel/ Acting Chief Executive and Administrative Officer, Merit Systems Protection Board; Mr. Tom Devine, Legal Director, Government Accountability Project; and Ms. Jacqueline Garrick, Founder, Whistleblowers of America.

Subcommittee Hearing—Preventing Harm to Veterans: Examining VA's Overpayments and Debt Collection Practices

On September 19, 2019, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing focused on VA's debt collection processes, particularly how overpayments occur and how VA identifies them, notifies veterans, and pursues collection. The hearing included two witness panels. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: The Honorable Jon Rychalski, Assistant Secretary for Management and Chief Financial Officer, Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Joseph Schmitt, Director of the Debt Management Center, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Charles Tapp, Chief Financial Officer, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Ms. Susan Reed, Executive Director of Revenue Operations, Office of Community Care, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Mr. Shane Liermann, Deputy National Legislative Director for Benefits, Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Mike Saunders, Director of Military and Consumer Policy, Veterans Education Success; Mr. Carlos Fuentes, Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; and Mr. Gerardo Avila, Deputy Director, Military Boards and Memorial Benefits, The American Legion. A statement for the record was submitted by the Council for Citizens Against Government Waste.

Subcommittee Hearing—Broken Promises: Assessing VA's Systems for Protecting Veterans from Clinical Harm

On October 16, 2019, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing to examine the quality of care delivered by clinicians VA employs or contracts with. The following off-

Committee members participated in the hearing: Representative Scott Peters (California), Joe Cunningham (South Carolina), Carol Miller (West Virginia), and Jennifer Wexton (Virginia). The following witnesses testified: Ms. Sharon Silas, Director, Health Care Team, U.S. Government Accountability Office; Dr. John Daigh, Assistant Inspector General for Healthcare Inspections, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Steven Lieberman, Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Gerard Cox, Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Organizational Excellence, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Ms. Jessica Bonjorni, Acting Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Workforce Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Subcommittee Hearing—Protecting Whistleblowers and Promoting Accountability: Is VA Doing Its Job?

On October 29, 2019, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing to examine whether the VA Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection (OAWP) is fulfilling its statutory responsibilities. The following witnesses testified: Dr. Tamara Bonzanto, Assistant Secretary for Accountability and Whistleblower Protection, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and The Honorable Michael Missal, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. A statement for the record was submitted by Representative Andy Biggs (Arizona).

Subcommittee Joint Hearing—The Status of the Department of Veterans Affairs' Financial Management Business Transformation

On December 5, 2019, the Subcommittees on Oversight and Investigations and Technology Modernization met in open session to conduct a joint oversight hearing examining efforts by VA to address longstanding financial management challenges and to modernize legacy financial management information technology (IT) systems. The following witnesses testified: The Honorable Jon Rychalski, Assistant Secretary for Management and Chief Financial Officer, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Terry Riffel, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Financial Management Business Transformation, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Daniel McCune, Executive Director, Enterprise Portfolio Management Office, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Subcommittee Hearing—Examining How the Department of Veterans Affairs Supports Survivors of Military Sexual Trauma

On February 5, 2020, the Subcommittee, in collaboration with the Women Veterans Task Force, met in open session and held a hearing to examine how VA supports survivors of Military Sexual Trauma. The following witnesses testified: Dr. Julie Kroviak, Deputy Assistance Inspector General for Healthcare Inspections of the Office of the Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Tammy Barlet, Health Policy Coordinator, The American

Legion; Ms. Kayla Williams, Senior Fellow and Director of the Military, Veterans, and Society Program, Center for a New American Security; Ms. Samantha Kubek, Staff Attorney, New York Legal Assistance Group; and Mr. Willie Clark, Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Beth Murphy, Executive Director of Compensation Service, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Margret Bell, National Deputy Director of Military Sexual Trauma, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Subcommittee Joint Hearing—Mission Critical: Examining Provider Relations During the Transitions to VA's New Community Care Program

On February 12, 2020, the Subcommittees on Oversight and Investigations and Health met in open session to conduct a joint oversight hearing to examine provider relations during the transition to VA's new community care program. The following witnesses testified: Dr. Kameron Matthews, Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Community Care, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. David J. McIntyre, President and CEO, TriWest Healthcare Alliance; Lieutenant General (Ret.) Patricia D. Horoho, Chief Executive Officer, OptumServe, Inc.; Mr. William A. Dombi, President, National Association of Home Care & Hospice; Mr. Erik L. Golnick, Co-Founder and CEO, Veteran & First Responder Healthcare; and Mr. Eric Frieman, Co-Founder, Veteran & First Responder Healthcare.

Subcommittee Hearing—Safety for All: Ending Sexual Harassment in the Department of Veterans Affairs

On July 22, 2020, the Subcommittee, in collaboration with the Women Veterans Task Force held an oversight hearing examining ending sexual harassment in VA. The hearing included two panels of witnesses. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: Ms. Pamela Powers, Acting Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Dan Sitterly, Assistant Secretary of Human Resources and Administration/Operations, Security, and Preparedness, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Patricia Hayes, Chief Consultant, Women's Health Services Office of Patient Care Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Ms. Lelia Jackson, Senior Strategist, Office of the Chief of Staff, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Ms. Cindy Brown Barnes, Director of the Education, Workforce, and Income Security Team; Government Accountability Office; and Joy Ilem, National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans.

Subcommittee Hearing—Modernizing VA's Medical Supply Chain: Lessons Learned from the Pandemic

On September 16, 2020, the Subcommittee met in open session and held a hearing examining VA's medical supply chain and lessons learned from the pandemic. The following witnesses testified: Ms. Karen Brazell, Principal Executive Director, Office of Acquisi-

tion, Logistics, and Construction and Chief Acquisition Officer and Acting Assistant Secretary for Enterprise Integration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Andrew Centineo, Executive Director of the Office of Procurement and Logistics, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Deborah Kramer, Acting Assistant Under Secretary of Health and Support Services, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Shelby Oakley, Director of Contracting and National Security Acquisitions, U.S. Government Accountability Office; and Mr. Roger Waldron, President, Coalition for Government Procurement.

SITE VISITS

Richmond, Virginia. On June 6, 2019, Subcommittee majority staff visited the Richmond, Virginia VAMC to oversee MISSION Act implementation. Very limited access was provided to the facility.

Chicago, Illinois. On August 13–16, 2019, majority and minority Subcommittee staff visited VA's National Acquisition Center and the VA/DoD Joint Medical Center, the Lovell Center, in Chicago, IL to gain a better understanding of a major VA initiative to adapt practices and policies from DoD for purchasing medical/surgical supply inventory.

Richmond, Virginia. On August 19, 2019, Subcommittee majority staff visited the Richmond, Virginia Medical Center to tour the medical center and conduct oversight into MISSION Act implementation.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. On August 27, 2019, Subcommittee majority staff visited the Philadelphia, PA medical center to conduct oversight into their implementation of the MISSION Act.

St. Paul, Minnesota. On September 23, 2019, Ranking Member Bergman and minority staff visited the Debt Management Center and met with Joseph Smith, Director of the Debt Management Center, and his team to better understand issues raised during the September 19, 2019, Subcommittee hearing on veteran debts and overpayments.

St. Paul, Minnesota. On January 22–23, 2020, majority and minority Subcommittee staff visited the Debt Management Center at the invitation of the Chief Financial Officer, The Honorable Jon Rychalski, to conduct oversight and get a better understanding of the Department's debt management process in order to better draft legislation regarding veteran debts and overpayments.

Baltimore, Maryland. On January 31, 2020, minority staff of the O&I and Health Subcommittees conducted a site visit of the Baltimore VA Medical Center. The purpose of the visit was to better understand the operations of the VA Police Service, the facility's experience with implementing the VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act, credentialing and privileging of health care providers, and the community care network.

Perry Point, Maryland. On December 4, 2020, Subcommittee majority staff visited the Program Support Center Supply Chain Management Services to conduct oversight of the Department's inventory management procedures, coordination with supply centers,

and plans for transitioning operations to Regional Readiness Centers in 2021.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY MODERNIZATION

SUSIE LEE, Nevada, *Chair*
JIM BANKS, Indiana, *Ranking Member*

JULIA BROWNLEY, California
CONOR LAMB, Pennsylvania
JOE CUNNINGHAM, South Carolina
CHIP ROY, Texas

SARAH R. GARCIA, *Majority Staff Director*
WILLIAM MALLISON, *Minority Staff Director*

OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

Subcommittee Hearing—"Mapping the Challenges and Progress of the Office of Information and Technology"

On April 2, 2019, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing examining how the Office of Information and Technology (OIT) at VA is supporting acquisition, implementation, and management of information technology systems throughout the Department. The hearing assessed management challenges and program issues documented by the Government Accountability Office and the Office of Inspector General and recommendations made to address these challenges and the status of implementing those recommendations.

The following witnesses testified: Carol Harris, Director, Information Technology Acquisition Management, Government Accountability Office; Brent Arronte, Deputy Assistant Inspector General, Office of Audits and Evaluations, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and, Michael Bowman, Director, Information Technology and Security Audits Divisions, Office of Audits and Evaluations, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The Subcommittee invited The Honorable James P. Gfrerer, Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology and Chief Information Officer, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, or his designee, however VA refused to send a witness.

Joint Subcommittee Hearing—"Examining Ongoing Forever GI Bill Implementation Efforts"

On May 9, 2019, the Subcommittees on Technology Modernization and Economic Opportunity met in open session to examine VA's execution of the "Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017", Public Law 115–48, and the "Forever GI Bill Housing Payment Fulfillment Act of 2018", Public Law 115–422. The hearing focused on the Department's work to implement Sections 107 and 501 of Public Law 115–48 and the agency's ability to complete necessary work to both make students whole, in accordance with Sections 107 and 501 of Public Law 115–48's implementation date, including the ability to process Spring Semester 2020 education claims without delays that would impact student veterans or institutions of higher learning.

The following witnesses testified: The Honorable Dr. Paul R. Lawrence, Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Charmain Bogue, Acting Executive Director, Education Services, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; The Honorable James P. Gfrerer, Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology and Chief Information Officer, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Robert Orifici, Information Technology Specialist for Architecture, Strategy, and Design; The Honorable Michael J. Missal, Inspector General for U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Dr. Jay Schnitzer, Vice President and Chief Technology Officer, MITRE Corporation.

Joint Subcommittee Hearing—"MISSION Critical: Caring for Our Heroes"

On May 22, 2019, the Subcommittees on Technology Modernization and Health met in open session to conduct a joint oversight hearing examining the delayed implementation of the Caregiver Program at VA and multiple failed efforts to develop an eligibility tool and management system. The hearing assessed lessons learned from past failures and examined the award of a new contract to the vendor Acumen Solutions to develop a new Caregiver program tool, called CARMA, based on the Salesforce customer service management platform.

This hearing had two witness panels. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: Dr. Steven Lieberman, Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Elyse Kaplan, Deputy Director, Caregiver Support Program, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Alan Constantian, Deputy Chief Information Officer for Account Management, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Ms. Carol Harris, Director, Information Technology Acquisition Management, Government Accountability Office. The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Dr. Wendell Ocasio, Chief Medical Officer, AbleVets; and Mr. Ken Beecher, Director, Acumen Solutions.

Subcommittee Hearing—"Modernizing Health Records for Servicemembers and Veterans: The Contractor Perspective"

On June 4, 2019, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing examining the implementation of electronic health records at DoD and VA from the perspective of the contractors engaged in the implementation. The purpose of the hearing was to assess the progress of implementation, challenges, and lessons learned with a prior implementation of the same system at DoD facilities and to set expectations for VA and its go-live event in spring 2020.

The following witnesses testified: Mr. Travis Dalton, President, Cerner Government Services; Mr. David Waltman, Vice President for Strategy and Technology, Cerner Government Services; Ms. Julie Stoner, Director and Client Accountable Executive, Cerner Government Services; Mr. Jon Scholl, President, Leidos Health Group; Mr. Richard Crowe, Executive Vice President, Booz Allen Hamilton.

Subcommittee Hearing—"Implementation of Electronic Health Record Systems at the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense"

On June 12, 2019, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing assessing the progress of implementation of electronic health records at both VA and DoD. The hearing examined the joint governance, data management plan, and path toward interoperability between the departments. The hearing also assessed the impact of the new system on servicemembers, veterans, clinicians, community providers, and others. The hearing

also reviewed progress on standing up the successor agency to the Interagency Program Office (IPO).

The following witnesses testified: Mr. John Windom, Executive Director, Office of Electronic Health Record Modernization, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Laura Kroupa, Chief Medical Officer, Office of Electronic Health Record Modernization, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. John Short, Chief Technology and Integration Officer, Office of Electronic Health Record Modernization, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. William J. Tinston, Program Executive Officer, Defense Healthcare Management Systems, U.S. Department of Defense; Maj. Gen. Lee E. Payne, M.D., Assistant Director for Combat Support, Defense Health Agency, U.S. Department of Defense; Dr. Lauren Thompson, Director, Interagency Program Office.

Subcommittee Hearing—"VistA Transition: Assessing the Future of an Electronic Health Records Pioneer"

On July 25, 2019, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing assessing how VA is planning for the transition, sustainment, and possible eventual decommissioning of the VistA over the next decade as VA implements a commercial electronic health record system. The hearing examined findings by GAO in its review of the cost and transition planning for VistA. The hearing also examined how VistA's ongoing use in clinical care and research settings, relevant data, and patient experience will be impacted by the transition to a commercial system. The hearing also assessed the role of workflow standardization, interoperability, and open architecture requirements in the transition.

The following witnesses testified: Ms. Carol Harris, Director, Information Technology Acquisition Management, Government Accountability Office; Dr. Paul Tibbits, Executive Director, Office of Technical Integration, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Charles Hume, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for the Office of Health Informatics, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Thomas O'Toole, Senior Medical Advisor, Office of the Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Clinical Operations, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. John Short, Chief Technology and Integration Officer, Office of Electronic Health Record Modernization, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Subcommittee Hearing—"The Future of VA Scheduling: Implementing a Commercial Off the Shelf Scheduling Solution at the Department of Veterans Affairs"

On September 26, 2019, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing assessing how VA plans to transition from the legacy VistA scheduling modules to the Cerner Scheduling Software (CSS). The hearing examined the history of the VistA Scheduling Enhancement (VSE) project, the decision-making process involved in reducing the scope and subsequently cancelling the Medical Appointment Scheduling System (MASS) Pilot and the December 2018 decision to implement the CSS. The hearing also examined VA's plan to decouple appointment sched-

uling from the implementation of Cerner Millennium and accelerate its implementation over five years, and related cost and resource requirements. In addition, the hearing examined the findings in the VA Office of Inspector General (OIG) report of August 2019, examining the management of VSE.

The following witnesses testified: Mr. John Windom, Executive Director, Office of Electronic Health Record Modernization, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Dominic Cussatt, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Michael Davies, Senior Advisor to the Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health Access, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Laura Kroupa, Chief Medical Officer, Office of Electronic Health Record Modernization, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. John Short, Chief Technology and Integration Officer, Office of Electronic Health Record Modernization, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Larry Reinkemeyer, Assistant Inspector General for Audits and Evaluations, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Subcommittee Hearing—"Cybersecurity Challenges and Cyber Risk Management at the Department of Veterans Affairs"

On November 14, 2019, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing examining how VA manages its cybersecurity program, including controlling access to confidential data, supply-chain management, and the safeguarding of its information technology assets. The hearing examined ongoing challenges in cybersecurity and VA's response to those challenges. The hearing also assessed VA's implementation of outstanding recommendations from the IG and GAO.

The following witnesses testified: Mr. Paul Cunningham, Deputy Assistant Secretary and Chief Information Security Officer, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Gary Stevens, Deputy Chief Information Security Officer and Executive Director for Information Security Policy and Strategy, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Andrew Centineo, Executive Director for Procurement and Logistics, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Luwanda Jones, Deputy Chief Information Officer for Strategic Sourcing, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Nick Dahl, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Audits and Evaluations, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Michael Bowman, Director for Information Technology and Security Audits Division, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Greg Wilshusen, Director, Information Technology and Cybersecurity, Government Accountability Office.

Subcommittee Hearing—"Go-Live March 2020: The Status of EHRM Readiness"

On November 20, 2019, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing examining the implementation of electronic health records at VA. At the time of the hearing, VA was

less than six months from the planned go-live at the first of three Initial Operating Capability (IOC) sites. The hearing assessed VA's preparations to launch its $16 billion EHRM program. The hearing reviewed progress on workflow standardization, infrastructure preparedness, data migration, the state of EHRM testing, end-user training, and decision-making in the final months before implementation, among other concerns.

The following off-committee members from the Washington State Delegation participated in the hearing: Representative Kim Schrier (Washington), Representative Derek Kilmer (Washington), Representative Rick Larson (Washington), Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers (Washington). The following witnesses testified: The Honorable James Byrne, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Steven L. Lieberman, Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. John Windom, Executive Director, Office of Electronic Health Record Modernization, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Laura Kroupa, Chief Medical Officer, Office of Electronic Health Record Modernization, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. John Short, Chief Technology and Integration Officer, Office of Electronic Health Record Modernization, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Michael Tadych, Director, VA Puget Sound Health Care System, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Dr. Robert J. Fischer, Director, Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Joint Subcommittee Hearing—"The Status of the Department of Veterans Affairs' Financial Management Business Transformation"

On December 5, 2019, the Subcommittees on Technology Modernization and Oversight and Investigations met in open session to conduct a joint oversight hearing to examining efforts by VA to address longstanding financial management challenges and to modernize legacy financial management IT systems. The IG has identified financial management as a major challenge at VA. The hearing examined the root causes of these challenges and VA's efforts to address them. The hearing also reviewed past attempts to modernize legacy financial systems and VA's decision in FY 2016 to charter a new program, the Financial Management Business Transformation (FMBT). The hearing examined progress in implementing FMBT and how the scope, timeline, and cost of the program have changed over the last year.

The following witnesses testified: the Honorable Jon Rychalski, Assistant Secretary for Management and Chief Financial Officer, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Terry Riffel, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Financial Management Business Transformation, U.S Department of Veterans Affairs; and, Mr. Daniel McCune, Executive Director, Enterprise Portfolio Management Office, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Subcommittee Roundtable—"Technology and Behavioral Health: Innovative Approaches to Reduce Veteran Suicide."

On January 28, 2020, the Subcommittee held a public roundtable to discuss how VA leverages research, innovation, emerging technology, and high-tech tools to provide care to veterans in the areas of behavioral health and suicide risk reduction. The Subcommittee sought information on how VA identifies, promotes, and supports potential technologies that can be scaled to provide new tools and treatments across VA and in other healthcare settings. The roundtable was also an opportunity to hear how VA leverages resources and partners with external groups to develop and scale promising new technologies. The Subcommittee invited participants from VHA Innovation Ecosystem, the VHA Office of Research and Development, and representatives from programs at VA medical centers around the country who are working on innovative treatments and technology to address mental health and reduce suicide.

Attendees included: Dr. Carolyn Clancy, Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Discovery, Education and Affiliate Networks, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Ryan Vega, Executive Director, VHA Innovation Ecosystem, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs ; Dr. Terri Gleason, PhD, Director, Clinical Science Research and Development Service, Office of Research and Development, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. James Pittman, PhD, San Diego VAMC, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Pete Spanos, Loma Linda VAMC, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Sara J. Landes, PhD, Central Arkansas VAHCS, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. David Carroll, PhD, Executive Director, Office of Mental Health & Suicide Prevention, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs;, Ms. Suzy Shirley, Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center/VHA Innovation Ecosystem, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Mark Bulson, VHA Innovation Ecosystem, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Subcommittee Hearing—"Data Privacy and Portability at VA: Protecting Veterans' Personal Data"

On February 12, 2020, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing assessing how VA manages veteran data, including issues of safety, security, confidentiality, interoperability, and availability. The hearing examined ongoing challenges in how large organizations, such as VA, manage data privacy, including emerging issues related to technology, information security, monetization of data, and VA's response to those challenges. The hearing was also an opportunity to examine how other organizations, including in the healthcare and technology sector, are responding to the changing data landscape.

The hearing featured two panels. The following witnesses testified on the first panel: Mr. Paul Cunningham, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Information Security, CISO, and Chief Privacy Officer,

Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Martha Orr, Deputy CIO for Quality, Performance and Risk, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Ms. LaShaunné G. David, Director for Privacy Service, Office of Information Security, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Mr. Nick Culbertson, CEO and Co-Founder, Protenus; Ms. Tina Olson Grande, Executive Vice President, Policy Healthcare Leadership Council Chair, Confidentiality Coalition; Mr. Ramsey Sulayman, Associate Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Mr. Harold F. Wolf, III, President and Chief Executive Officer, Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS).

Subcommittee Hearing—"Getting It Right: Challenges with the Go-live of Electronic Health Record Modernization"

On March 5, 2020, the Subcommittee met in open session to conduct an oversight hearing examining VA's February 10, 2020, announcement of a delay in the implementation of the new Cerner electronic health record (EHR) system. The new system was scheduled to go-live on March 28, 2020, in Spokane, WA, at the Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center. Prior to that announcement VA and Cerner had given little indication of the need for delay. Given the announcement, the Subcommittee had numerous questions about what led to the delay and what VA is doing to respond. The hearing examined ongoing readiness concerns with testing, training, and external functionalities such as the veteran health portal and VA online applications. Additionally, the hearing reviewed VA's efforts to engage and communicate with Veteran Service Organizations, the veteran community, and VA staff.

The following witnesses testified: The Honorable Dr. Melissa Glynn, Assistant Secretary for Enterprise Integration, Office of Enterprise Integration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Richard Stone, Executive in Charge, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Robert J. Fischer, Director, Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. John Windom, Executive Director, Office of Electronic Health Record Modernization, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. David Case, Deputy Inspector General, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Mr. Travis Dalton, President, Cerner Government Services.

Subcommittee Joint Hearing—"VA Telehealth During the COVID–19 Pandemic: Expansion and Impact"

On June 23, 2020, the Subcommittees on Technology Modernization and Health met in open session (in-person and via Cisco Webex) and held a joint hearing to conduct oversite related to VA's use and expansion of telehealth during the COVID–19 pandemic. This hearing featured two panels of witnesses.

The following witnesses testified on the first panel: Dr. Jennifer MacDonald, Chief Consultant to the Deputy Undersecretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Vet-

erans Affairs; Mr. Jack Galvin, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for IT Development Security Operations, Office of Information Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Neil Evans, Chief Officer, Office of Connected Care, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Dr. Kevin Galpin, Executive Director, Telehealth Services, Office of Connected Care, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Chief William Smith, Chief of the Valdez Tribe of Alaska and Vice Chairperson, National Indian Health Board; Ms. Lindsay Church, Co-Founder/Executive Director, Minority Veterans of America; Mr. Marquis Barefield, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; and Ms. Tammy Barlet, Associate Director, National Legislative Services, Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Joint Subcommittee Hearing—"Examining Ongoing Forever GI Bill Implementation Efforts"

On September 16, 2020, the Subcommittees on Technology Modernization and Economic Opportunity met in open session (in-person and via Cisco Webex) to examine the IT needs of the VA Education Services business line, the current technology debt, the cost of maintaining legacy systems, and the risks associated with the implementation of future GI Bill improvements with current infrastructure. This hearing featured two panels of witnesses.

The following witnesses testified on the first panel: The Honorable Dr. Paul R. Lawrence, Ph.D., Under Secretary, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; The Honorable James P. Gfrerer, Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology and Chief Information Officer, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Charmain Bogue, Executive Director, Education Services, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Robert Orifici, Director of Education & Veteran Readiness and Employment Product Line, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Ms. Carol Harris, Director, Information Technology Acquisition Management Issues, U.S. Government Accountability Office.

The following witnesses testified on the second panel: Dr. Jay Schnitzer, Vice President, Senior Physician and Chief Technology Officer, MITRE Corporation; and Mr. Patrick Murray, Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Subcommittee Hearing—"Examining VA's Ongoing Efforts in the Electronic Health Record Modernization Program

On September 30, 2020, the Subcommittee met in open session (in-person and via Cisco Webex) to conduct an oversight hearing examining VA's ongoing efforts to launch its $16 billion EHRM program with specific emphasis on the issues and challenges posed by the COVID–19 pandemic. The hearing examined VA's revised deployment schedule; ongoing readiness concerns with testing and training; expectations about patient safety, and external functionalities such as the veteran health portal and CSS. Additionally, the hearing reviewed VA's efforts to engage and commu-

nicate with Veteran Service Organizations, the veteran community, and VA staff.

The following witnesses testified: Mr. John Windom, Executive Director, Office of Electronic Health Record Modernization, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Laura Kroupa, Chief Medical Officer, Office of Electronic Health Record Modernization, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. John Short, Chief Technology and Integration Officer, Office of Electronic Health Record Modernization, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Robert Fischer, Director, Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. William Tinston, Director, Federal Electronic Health Record Modernization Program Office; and Mr. Travis Dalton, President, Cerner Government Services.

SITE VISITS

Kansas City, Missouri. On April 8–12, 2019 and July 8–12, 2019, majority and minority Subcommittee staff traveled to Kansas City, MO, to observe the proceedings of clinical workshops hosted by VA and Cerner Corporation. These workshops are a key part of the implementation of electronic health records at VA. Clinical Councils established by VA are responsible for holding at least eight workshops over an 18-month period. These workshops are meant to establish clinical workflows (e.g., how specific healthcare tasks are carried out) which will be translated into system configuration by Cerner and its subcontractors. The workshops allowed staff to observe clinical and technical sessions and to engage with VA and Cerner staff on numerous aspects of the implementation.

Seattle and Spokane, Washington. On August 5–9, 2019, majority and minority Subcommittee staff from the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees traveled to Seattle and Spokane, WA to observe the Local Area Workshop for VA Puget Sound Healthcare System. The local area workshop gave staff an opportunity to observe the translation of decisions made at the National Workshop to the local site-level, and the validation of those decisions. While in Washington State, staff visited the Seattle VA Medical Center, American Lake VA Medical Center in Tacoma, Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center in Spokane, and the 92nd Medical Group at Fairchild Air Force Base.

Kansas City, Missouri. On August 19–21, 2019, majority Subcommittee staff traveled to Kansas City, MO, to attend EHRM National Workshop 7 to observe the technical workshops hosted by VA and Cerner Corporation. Staff toured Cerner Corporation's on-site data center and met with technical personnel in senior roles in the EHRM Project.

Kansas City, Missouri. On September 30–October 3, 2020, minority Subcommittee staff traveled to Kansas City, MO, to attend EHRM National Workshop 8 to observe the technical workshops hosted by VA and Cerner Corporation. Staff toured Cerner Corporation's on-site data center and met with technical personnel in senior roles in the EHRM Project.

Spokane, Washington. On February 26–28, 2020, majority and minority Subcommittee staff traveled to Spokane, Washington, to conduct oversight subsequent to VA's February 10, 2020 announce-

ment that the planned March 28, 2020 go-live of the new Cerner Millennium electronic health record would be delayed. Staff met with leadership from Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center and from the Cerner implementation team to discuss issues with the implementation and the plan for deployment going forward. Subcommittee staff also met with VA employees who had held user acceptance testing and super user training to gain a better understanding of the issues discovered during these crucial steps in the implementation.

Rosslyn, Virginia. On October 25–26, 2020 majority and minority Subcommittee staff traveled to the EHRM Go-Live Command Center in Rosslyn, VA, to observe EHRM go-live at the Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center.

Martinsburg, West Virginia. On December 12, 2020, majority and minority Subcommittee staff traveled to the VA Cybersecurity Operations Center in Martinsburg, WV, to tour the facility and receive briefings from program staff regarding information security issues.

ACTIVITIES OF THE WOMEN VETERANS TASK FORCE

JULIA BROWNLEY, California, *Chair*

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP ON THE TASK FORCE

KATHLEEN M. RICE, New York
CONOR LAMB, Pennsylvania, *Vice-Chairman*
MIKE LEVIN, California
ANTHONY BRINDISI, New York
MAX ROSE, New York
CHRIS PAPPAS, New Hampshire
ELAINE G. LURIA, Virginia
SUSIE LEE, Nevada
JOE CUNNINGHAM, South Carolina
GILBERT R. CISNEROS, JR., California
GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN, (Northern Mariana Islands)
COLIN Z. ALLRED, Texas
LAUREN UNDERWOOD, Illinois
MARK TAKANO, California (ex-officio)
GUS M. BILIRAKIS, Florida
AUMUA AMATA COLEMAN RADEWAGEN, (American Samoa)
MIKE BOST, Illinois
NEAL P. DUNN, Florida
JACK BERGMAN, Michigan
ANDY BARR, Kentucky
DANIEL MEUSER, Pennsylvania
DAVID P. ROE, M.D., Tennessee (ex-officio)

ANDREA N. GOLDSTEIN, *Senior Policy Advisor*

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

The Women Veterans Task Force coordinated all legislative activities through the subcommittees of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

Task Force Roundtable—"Challenges in Advocacy for Women Veterans"

On June 26, 2019, the Women Veterans Task Force held a roundtable to consider and resolve representational challenges in the nation's most powerful VSOs. The following witnesses attended: Dr. Linda Schwartz. Special Advisor to the President, Vietnam Veterans of America; Ms. Terri Williams, 1st Junior Vice Commander, Disabled American Veterans, Chapter 10; Ms. Denise Perry, Maryland State Commander, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Ms. Denise Rohan, Past National Commander, The American Legion; Ms. Melissa Bryant, Former Chief Policy Officer, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; Ms. Jennifer Silva, Chief Program Officer, Wounded Warrior Project.

Task Force Roundtable—"VSO Roundtable: Legislative and Oversight Priorities for Women Veterans"

On July 25, 2019, the Women Veterans Task Force held a roundtable to receive input from Veteran Service Organizations regarding the Task Force's oversight and legislative agenda. The following witnesses attended: Ms. Tammy Barlet, Health Policy Coordinator, The American Legion; Ms. Emma Moore, Research Assistant, Military Veterans and Society Program, Center for a New American Security; Ms. Joy Ilem, National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Mr. Travis Horr, Associate Legislative Director, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; CDR (Ret) Rene Campos, Senior Director, Government Relations, Veterans-Wounded Warrior Care, Military Officers Association of America; Ms. Adelaide Khan, Programs and Services Manager, Protect our Defenders, representing the Military Women's Coalition; Ms. Heather Ansley, Associate Executive Director of Government Relations, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Ms. Susan Lukas, Director of Legislative and Military Policy, Reserve Officers Association; Mr. Ken Greenberg, Director of Veterans and Military Policy; The Retired Enlisted Association; CAPT (Ret), Lory Manning, Director of Government Operations, Servicewomen's Action Network; Ms. Kristina Keenan, Past Post Commander, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Dr. Linda Schwartz, Special Advisor to the President, Vietnam Veterans of America; Ms. Ginger Miller, Chief Executive Officer, Women Veterans Interactive; Ms. Jennifer Silva, Chief Program Officer, Wounded Warrior Project.

Task Force Roundtable—"Breaking the Silence: Addressing Military Sexual Trauma in the Military and Veteran Communities"

On September 25, 2019, the Women Veterans Task Force conducted a roundtable discussion with representatives from Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Veterans Benefits Administration

(VBA), Department of Defense (DoD), veteran service organizations (VSO), community-based organizations, and researchers to discuss sexual violence in the military, particularly Military Sexual Trauma (MST). The following witnesses attended: Mr. Willie C. Clark, Sr, Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations, Veterans Benefits Administration; U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Beth Murphy, Director, Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Laurine Carson, Deputy Executive Director, Policy & Procedures, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. David Carroll, Executive Director, Office of Mental Health & Suicide Prevention, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Susan McCutcheon, National Mental Health Director, Family Svc/Women's Mental Health Director /MST, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Rear Admiral Ann M. Burkhardt, US Navy, Director, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office, Department of Defense; Ms. Joy Ilem, National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Ms. Meggan K. Thomas, MPH, Veterans Casework Consultant-Health, National Veterans Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Ms. Lindsay Church, M.A, Chief Executive Officer, Minority Veterans of America; Captain (Ret.) Lory Manning, Director of Government Relations, Service Women's Action Network; Colonel (Ret) Don Christensen, Chief Executive Officer, Protect Our Defenders; Ms. Kayla Williams, M.A., Senior Fellow and Director, Military Veterans and Society Program, Center for a New American Security; Ms. Pam Campos-Palma, M.A., U.S. Air Force Veteran, Community Organizer and Advocate; Ms. Chandini Jha, Yale Law School Veterans Legal Clinic, Yale University.

Task Force Roundtable—"Trends and Opportunities in Interdisciplinary Research Regarding Women Veterans"

On October 17, 2019, the Women Veterans Task Force conducted a roundtable discussion regarding interdisciplinary research regarding women veterans. The following witnesses attended: Dr. Elizabeth (Becky) Yano, PhD, MSPH, Director, VA HSR&D, VA Greater Los Angeles, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Donna Washington, M.D., MPH, Lead, Women's Health Focused Research, VA HSR&D, VA Greater Los Angeles, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Tammy Barlet, Health Policy Coordinator, The American Legion; Ms. Lindsay Church, M.A., Chief Executive Officer, Minority Veterans of America; Ms. Lyla Kohistany, President, PROMOTE; Dr. Kyleanne "Ky" Hunter, PhD, Executive Director, Brady Campaign, U.S. Marine Corps Veteran; Ms. Caitlin "Cat" Clason, MSN, CRNP, WHNP-BC, Researcher, University of Pennsylvania, U.S. Army Veteran.

Task Force Roundtable—"Resilience and Coping: Mental Health of Women Veterans"

On May 12, 2020, The Women Veterans Task Force conducted a roundtable discussion examining mental health and wellness in women veterans. The following witnesses attended: Dr Patty Hayes, Chief Consultant, Office of Women's Health, Veterans

Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Elizabeth Yano, Director, VA HSR&D Center for the Study of Healthcare Innovation, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Susan McCutcheon, National Mental Health Director, Family Services, Women's Mental Health, and Military Sexual Trauma, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr. LeeAnn E. Bruce, National Intimate Partner Violence Program Manager, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Ms. Tammy Barlet, Associate Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Mrs. Maureen Elias, Associate Legislative Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Ms. Stephanie Gattas, Chair, Wellness Policy Committee, Military Women's Coalition; Ms. Kaitlynn Hetrick, Associate, Government Affairs, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; Ms. Joy Ilem, National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Ms. Jennifer Silva, Chief Policy Officer, Wounded Warrior Project; Dr. Kate Hendricks Thomas, Author, Researcher, Faculty, George Mason University Department of Global and Community Health. A written statement was provided by Minority Veterans of America.

Task Force Roundtable—"2020 Report of the VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans."

On December 9, 2020, the Women Veterans Task Force conducted a roundtable discussion on the 2020 Report of the VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans. The following witnesses attended: Command Master Chief Octavia Harris, U.S. Navy, Retired, Chair, VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans; Colonel Betty Yarbrough, US Army, Retired, Incoming Chair, VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans; Lieutenant Colonel Shannon McLaughlin, Massachusetts National Guard, Vice Chair, Benefits Subcommittee, VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans; Dr. Lisa Kirk, Lieutenant Colonel, Maryland Air National Guard, Retired Vice Chair, Health Subcommittee, VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans; Ms. Lindsay Church, Executive Director, Minority Veterans of America; Mrs. Maureen Elias, Associate Legislative Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America; and Ms. Joy Ilem, National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans.

SITE VISITS

Washington, D.C. On March 25, 2019, Chairwoman Brownley, the Senior Policy Advisor for the Women Veterans Task Force, and majority Health Subcommittee staff visited the Washington, D.C. VA Medical Center, which included a tour of the women's health clinic.

Phoenix VA Medical Center. On April 20, 2019, Women Veterans Task Force and majority Health Subcommittee Staff traveled to conduct oversight of the Phoenix, Arizona Veterans Affairs Medical Center, focusing on the facility's outreach to the veterans at risk of suicide, as well as, the unique services the facility offers to women veterans.

Oxnard, California. On April 22, 2019, Women Veterans Task Force and Health majority Subcommittee Staff traveled to Southern California to conduct oversight at the following VA Centers: VA

Oxnard Community Based Outpatient Center, Sepulveda VA Ambulatory Medical Center, West Los Angeles VA Medical Center, in order to visit the women's health centers, suicide prevention efforts, and see preparations for the implementation of the MISSION Act.

Chicago, Illinois. On July 18, 2019, the Women Veterans Task Force conducted site visits in Chicago, IL, to the James Lovell Federal Healthcare Center in North Chicago, IL, and the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center in Chicago, IL. These visits focused on women veterans' healthcare, military sexual trauma, MISSION Act implementation, and homelessness.

Anchorage, Alaska. On July 29–Aug 2, 2019, Women Veterans Task Force and majority Subcommittee Staff conducted an oversight trip to Anchorage and Fairbanks VAMCs, and held meetings with active-duty servicewomen on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, meetings with Alaska state leadership and women veterans community leaders to learn of women veterans' health resources at VA and community-based resources supporting women veterans.

Long Beach, California. On August 7, 2019, Chairwoman Brownley and the Senior Policy Advisor for the Women Veterans Task Force conducted a site visit to the Long Beach VA Medical Center to observe best practices, gaps, and opportunities for serving women veterans.

Omaha, Nebraska. On August 19–20, 2019, the Senior Policy Advisor for the Women Veterans Task Force participated in the National Association of State Women Veterans Coordinators Conference in Omaha, NE, to strengthen relationships, and improve outreach efforts nationwide and gain feedback on work of the Task Force and how federal and state efforts can be mutually supportive.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. On October 22, 2019, the Senior Policy Advisor for the Women Veterans Task Force conducted a site visit to the Philadelphia VA Medical Center to observe best practices, gaps, and opportunities for serving women veterans. They also met with the director for Veterans Services for the City of Philadelphia.

Boston, Massachusetts. On November 1, 2019, Chairwoman Brownley and the Senior Policy Advisor for the Women Veterans Task Force staff conducted a site visit to the Boston VA Medical Center at Jamaica Plain to observe best practices, gaps, and opportunities for serving women veterans.

New York, New York. On November 4, 2019, the Senior Policy Advisor for the Women Veterans Task Force conducted a site visit to the Manhattan Harbor VA Medical Center to observe best practices, gaps, and opportunities for serving women veterans.

Wappingers Falls, New York. On November 5, 2019, the Senior Policy Advisor for the Women Veterans Task Force conducted a site visit to the Hudson Valley VA Medical Center at Castle Point to observe best practices, gaps, and opportunities for serving women veterans.

Albany, New York. On November 6, 2019, the Senior Policy Advisor for the Women Veterans Task Force conducted a site visit to the Albany-Stratton VA Medical Center to observe best practices, gaps, and opportunities for serving women veterans. She also met

with VISN 2 leadership to discuss the above issues, as well as telehealth expansion.

Buffalo, New York, VA Regional Office and Buffalo VA Medical Center. On November 21, 2019, the Women Veterans Task Force and majority and minority Economic Opportunity Subcommittee staff visited the Buffalo, NY VA Regional Office to conduct oversight on the implementation of section 107 and 501 of the Forever GI Bill, along with program updates of VET-TEC and the Edith Nourse Rogers Science Technology Engineering Math (STEM) Scholarship. The Women Veterans Task Force and minority Economic Opportunity Subcommittee staff conducted a site visit of the Buffalo VA Medical Center to tour the women's health clinic, the inpatient psychiatry ward, and the child care pilot site.

San Diego, California. On February 19–22, 2020, the Senior Policy Advisor for the Women Veterans Task Force supported Chair Brownley in a visit to Naval Medical Center San Diego, Naval Base San Diego, Naval Amphibious Base San Diego, and the WOVEN Program to identify resources to best serve servicewomen transitioning out of the military.

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