

**Statement of Congressman James R. Walkinshaw
House Armed Services Committee – Member Day
April 10, 2026**

Thank you to Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Smith for permitting members to advocate for their priorities as you begin to construct the Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) National Defense Authorization Act. I encourage bipartisan members of this committee to support the inclusion of the bipartisan Streamline Upgrades for Veterans Act and language requiring an inventory of “shadow AI” use cases across the Department of Defense in the FY27 NDAA.

H.R. 7952: Streamline Upgrades for Veterans Act

A July 2025, Government Accountability Office report titled “Military Discharge: Actions Needed to Help Ensure Consistent and Timely Upgrade Decisions” found that Discharge Review Boards (DRB) and the Discharge Appeal Review Board do not have required time frames for adjudicating cases involving liberal consideration, and the Army, Navy and Air Force each have different time frames. A veteran that suffers from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) may have to wait over a year to hear back about their discharge upgrade appeal, in which some veterans have tragically died while waiting for their discharge upgrade application to be adjudicated. Veterans suffering from TBI and PTSD need critical housing, healthcare, and educational assistance and deserve to hear back on their discharge upgrade appeal in a timely manner.

For this reason, Rep. Moylan and I introduced the bipartisan Streamline Upgrades for Veterans Act, H.R.7952. This legislation improves transparency and reduces delays in the adjudication of discharge upgrade appeals involving liberal consideration by the military branches’ DRBs. Specifically, it requires a report from the Secretary of Defense that contains the current adjudication timeframes under liberal consideration, the reasons for differences across branches, staffing levels dedicated to these cases, and recommendations to expedite adjudication. It also renews staffing requirements for service review agencies to ensure adequate personnel that expired last year. By addressing delays and disparities across the services, this bipartisan bill helps ensure veterans, especially those impacted by PTSD or TBI, can access the benefits and care they have earned without unnecessary delay.

Shadow AI Inventory

Artificial intelligence adoption within the Department of Defense is critical to our national security. As the Department integrates AI into its operations, it is equally important that Congress and DoD have clear visibility into how and where these AI-enabled tools are being used. This is necessary to mitigate potential cybersecurity and operational risks. As such, I urge the committee to address the growing use of unapproved or “shadow AI” tools across the Department.

Current AI inventory practices fail to capture the full scope of AI use across the Department, for example, when personnel rely on publicly available, unvetted tools outside sanctioned IT environments. These gaps in visibility exacerbate existing cybersecurity risks, as unsanctioned use of AI enabled technology can expose sensitive data and bypass existing security controls.

I urge the committee to include language in the NDAA directing the Department of Defense to conduct a department-wide inventory of AI systems and tools, including the deployment of

automated capabilities, to identify and assess “shadow AI” activity. The Department should also be required to develop a plan to bring these systems into approved environments where appropriate or eliminate their use where risks cannot be mitigated. I further urge the committee to direct the Department to provide a report to Congress summarizing the scope of “shadow AI” use detected within the Department, and any related cybersecurity risks those use cases have introduced. This reporting is necessary to give Congress a clear picture of AI use across the Department and to ensure identified cybersecurity risks are addressed.