



COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY
Lamar Smith, Chairman

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Statement by Chairwoman Barbara Comstock (R-Va.)

Empowering U.S. Veterans Through Technology

Chairwoman Comstock: The impetus for today's hearing goes back a year ago to May 2017, when I first met one of our witnesses John Wordin at a "Ride 2 Recovery" event for veterans in Manassas, Virginia. I heard first-hand from John about the HERO Trak system and the wearable health-monitoring device with software designed to help veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). I was fascinated by this technology and its potential to help our veterans.

With the 10th District home to many research and technology companies on the forefront of technological innovation, I am especially pleased to chair this hearing today to profile technologies to help our dedicated veterans who have served our nation.

By shining a spotlight on cutting-edge technologies designed to help combat-injured veterans, the Science Committee can help spread the word about the wonderful efforts in which our witnesses are engaged, and their impact on the lives of the brave men and women whose sacrifices deserve our care and attention.

I look forward to hearing more about the joint Department of Energy (DOE) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) collaboration that will leverage DOE's high performance computing and machine learning capabilities to analyze health records of more than 20 million veterans maintained by the VA.

The goal of this partnership is to arm the VA with data it can use to potentially improve health care offered to veterans by developing new treatments and preventive strategies.

This win-win enterprise could revolutionize quality of health care for veterans, while simultaneously providing DOE with unique insight and information to support development of next generation technologies.

Representing SoldierStrong, Mr. Meek will describe the SoldierSuit and his efforts to purchase and donate this transformational robotic exoskeleton device comprised of separate devices.

Amazingly, it can help provide paralyzed veterans the ability to once again stand, walk and hug a loved one eye-to-eye—a point eloquently emphasized in Ms. MacCallum's testimony.

John Wordin founded Project Hero ten years ago to help veterans and first responders affected by injuries including traumatic brain injury and PTSD through programs such as Ride 2 Recovery.

While the success of the program and the therapeutic benefits of cycling have benefited thousands of veterans, I appreciate the opportunity to highlight today how the HERO Trak monitoring system can benefit veterans with PTSD, including how it can help generate more data on best practices to improve the lives of veterans.

And I welcome Dr. Major, who will describe his very important research on motor control related to veterans and service members' prosthetics and orthotics and the underlying factors of falls.

An added important benefit of today's hearing is that the technologies, research and federal programs we will hear about have promising implications for the population at large. I thank all our witnesses for joining us today, and for your service and efforts to help improve the lives of our nation's veterans.

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