



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

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Statement by Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)
Empowering U.S. Veterans Through Technology

Chairman Smith: Thank you Chairwoman Comstock for holding such an interesting and important hearing today.

Today's hearing will highlight some fascinating technologies and efforts that empower veterans.

The Titan supercomputer at Oak Ridge National Laboratory can process a quadrillion calculations per second—that's a number followed by 15 zeros! Thanks to collaboration between the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), this computer will be used to analyze the health records of 24 million veterans in order to provide improved care.

The partnership between the VA and DOE could transform the delivery of healthcare to our veterans as we use complex computer models to learn more about the causes and warning signs of various diseases.

The VA has identified three priority areas of focus for early delivery impacts: suicide prevention, prostate cancer and cardiovascular disease.

By providing DOE with access to a large-scale database, the VA will help the Energy Department develop next generation algorithms and modeling capability while ultimately providing the VA with data it can use to improve veterans' quality of life.

One of the witnesses today, Mr. John Wordin, is collaborating with a Texas A&M University professor on a wearable device to help veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. We also welcome Dr. Farzan Sasangohar, assistant professor in the Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering at A&M. Thank you and your team in Texas for your hard work and efforts to support our veterans.

And I would also like to thank Mr. Chris Meek and Ms. Martha MacCallum for their efforts on behalf of SoldierStrong. In January, SoldierStrong donated a robotic exoskeleton to the Audie Murphy Memorial VA Hospital in San Antonio, which I represent. This donation will help the facility provide state-of-the-art rehabilitative care to veterans.

One of the benefits of hearing from the experts today is that the fruits of their labor are not limited to helping veterans. They can be applied to people all over the country and the world who suffer from similar ailments or injuries.

In addition to this hearing, the Science Committee approved legislation last November to help veterans overcome obstacles as they re-enter the workforce.

H.R. 4323, the Supporting Veterans in STEM Careers Act, was introduced by Rep. Neal Dunn of Florida, a member of the Science Committee. The bill promotes veterans' involvement in STEM education, computer science and scientific research and employment. It passed the House in December and awaits action in the Senate.

To me, the subject of this hearing shows yet again how technology can meet the world's challenges.

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