

Statement of Chairman Steve Chabot
Committee on Small Business
Before the Committee on House Committee on Veterans Affairs
May 16, 2018

Good morning, Chairman Roe, Ranking Member Walz, and Members of the Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to submit this statement as a part of the first-ever House Committee on Veterans' Affairs bipartisan Member Day. Let me begin by thanking the Committee for its tireless work and longstanding advocacy for America's veterans. I will submit my statement today as both the Chairman of the House Committee on Small Business and as the representative of Ohio's First Congressional District.

I. Veterans and Small Businesses

As this Committee is aware, our nation's veterans make up a significant percentage of the American workforce. Many of our nation's heroes exit military service and choose to begin a new undertaking: opening a business. Some even own and maintain a business while serving in the military reserves. Historically, the majority of veteran-owned businesses are small businesses. In fact, there are an estimated 2.5 million nonfarm firms in the United States owned by veterans, and 99 percent of these firms are categorized by the Small Business Administration (SBA) as small businesses. These businesses employ approximately 5 million workers and account for more than \$1 trillion in business receipts.

As Chairman of the House Committee on Small Business, it has been one of my main priorities to increase the opportunities available to veteran-owned small businesses (VOSBs) and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses (SDVOSBs). Our Committee has conducted oversight hearings and authored legislation to ensure that veteran entrepreneurs have the necessary tools for success. We are especially grateful for the opportunities you have given us to collaborate with you on initiatives. Unfortunately, veteran entrepreneurs continue to experience many of the challenges that other small business owners face and more, often those that are unique to their background of military service.

Last Congress, the House and Senate passed and the President signed the Veteran's Entrepreneurship Act of 2015. This legislation, while authored by the Small Business Committee, could not have been passed without the full support of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and was a crucial step forward in increasing the number of 7(a) loans that provide veterans with access to necessary capital. We also appreciate the numerous joint hearings with your Committee that were held to learn more about what is best for our nation's veterans in the small business arena.

During the 115th Congress, our Committees have continued to work together, and I have been pleased to see our relationship grow. So far this year, our Committee has introduced two veteran small business bills. The first, H.R. 5044, the Service-Disabled Veterans Small Business Continuation Act, would clarify the Small Business Act to align with new SDVOSB spousal survivorship rules, making it easier for surviving spouses of veterans to maintain the veteran-owned or service-disabled veteran-owned status of their small business after their veteran spouse passes away. The second, H.R. 5494, the Projecting Business Opportunities for Veterans Adjustment Act of 2018, would ensure that SDVOSBs and VOSBs certified through the

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Department of Veteran's Affairs Vets First Contracting Program comply with the proper limitations on subcontracting. Too often, veteran small businesses are subject to improper pass-throughs at the hands of larger contractors. America's veterans deserve better treatment from federal contractors, and these crucial pieces of legislation are a step in the right direction.

II. Ohio's First Congressional District

Ohio's first district is home to over 37,000 military veterans. Throughout my time in Congress, I have been reminded of how much we owe to these men and women in uniform, because it is through their dedication and sacrifice that Americans remain safe and free. I am humbled to be their advocate in Washington.

My district is also home to the Cincinnati VA Medical Center. The Cincinnati VA Medical Center is a two-division campus, with one location in my district and one at Fort Thomas in Kentucky. This hospital provides services for seventeen counties in Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana. The Cincinnati VA Medical Center provides medical care and programs for post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injuries, health promotion disease prevention, women veteran healthcare, and more to veterans on location and through tele-health resources. While this medical center prioritizes providing the utmost care to its veterans, I have long believed that veterans deserve more choices when it comes to their health care. That is why I was so pleased when this Committee introduced the VA Mission Act, meaningful legislation to continue the Veterans Choice Program. I am glad that the House will be considering this legislation this week and I look forward to its passage.

III. Conclusion

I know that we agree that our nation's veterans deserve the full support of Congress in all aspects of life, be it business development, health care, and more. I appreciate our work together on behalf of our veterans, and look forward to working with you to ensure that veterans have the necessary resources to bring their business dreams to life and continue their contributions to the American economy. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before you today.