

Member Day Hearing
House Committee on Veterans Affairs
Full Committee
Greg Stanton (D-AZ)
Thursday, December 4, 2025, at 10:30 AM ET, Cannon 360

Thank you, Chairman Bost, Ranking Member Takano, and Committee members, for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of Arizona's half a million veterans.

CLAIM SHARKS

My Veterans Advisory Council, a group of former service members and their families, have raised one issue again and again: that of predatory "claim sharks."

When veterans file for VA benefits, they can do so with the help of an accredited representative. Plenty of Veterans Service Organizations offer such assistance.

But predatory, unaccredited companies – "claims sharks" – take advantage of our veterans, charging high fees to help file VA benefits claims. Veterans were swindled out of \$419 million last year alone.¹

That's why I'm proud to back Congressman Pappas' *GUARD VA Benefits Act*, which would reinstate explicit criminal penalties on claim sharks.

I've also introduced bipartisan legislation, *the Standardized Accreditation information for Veteran Ease, or "SAVE" Act.*

¹ 2025.12.02 War Horse: [VA Warned These Companies They May Be Breaking the Law. Most Are Still in Business](#); research from the Federal Trade Commission

The SAVE Act, H.R. 1746, requires the VA to keep an updated, searchable database of accredited representatives, and create a trademark they can use on their website, social media or marketing materials to be easily identified.

It's a common-sense solution to help veterans more easily differentiate between those who are legitimately accredited by the VA and those who are not. And it's a direct suggestion from veterans on my Advisory Council.

Congress should also look to more fully highlight VSO services during the Transition Assistance Program for service members and their families transitioning from active duty. Veterans won't know that they have access to and a right to free assistance if we don't advertise it better.

OTHER PRIORITIES

My Veterans Advisory Council and I are concerned about addressing veteran homelessness and ensuring vets get the very best health care.

When I served as Mayor of Phoenix, the city became the first in the nation to end chronic homelessness among military veterans.

We learned a big lesson: It's one thing to put a roof over a chronically homeless veteran, but it's another thing to provide the support services to keep them off the streets. Mental health services, health care, substance-abuse treatment. That's how we broke the cycle of homelessness.

But President Trump's Department of Housing and Urban Development is massively disrupting homelessness funding, and shifting away from a 'Housing Plus Services' model.

Because of this, more than 4,000 veterans could lose housing, increasing veteran homelessness by 12 percent.² And we have no way of estimating the number of veterans who may be living in other programs funded by the Continuum of Care program that are not designated as specifically for veterans.

I hope the Trump Administration will work with Congress to prevent this backsliding.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

² <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/hud-policy-change-could-push-4000-veterans-disabilities-out-housing>