

REMARKS/QUESTIONS (5 MIN)

Full Committee Oversight Hearing: Disability Claims Backlog

Wednesday, April 15, 2026 — 10:15 AM — 360 CHOB

Rep. Abraham J. Hamadeh

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to start by saying something that does not get said enough in these hearings. The men and women at the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) who are processing these claims every day deserve recognition. Three million claims were completed last fiscal year. A record. Not because of some new program or some consultant's recommendation, but because the people doing the work were finally given the leadership and the tools to do it right.

So let's be direct about where we are.

Since President Trump took office 15 months ago, the VA disability claims backlog has dropped 67%—from nearly 265,000 claims on Inauguration Day to roughly 87,000 today. Last fiscal year, VBA processed a record 3 million claims. By contrast, the backlog grew 24% over the prior four years. President Biden inherited the lowest

backlog in modern history (64,738 claims in December 2019) and left office with 265,000. The PACT Act increased volume, but leadership means managing that volume—not being overwhelmed by it.

I'm cautiously optimistic about this direction. The real question for this Committee is whether this progress—and the surge capacity behind it—is sustainable. That's what I want to explore today.