

**STATEMENT OF
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DELEGABLE DUTIES OF THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR BENEFITS
VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
APRIL 15, 2026**

Good morning, Chairman Bost, Ranking Member Takano, and distinguished Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to highlight improvements the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has implemented to reduce the backlog of Veterans waiting for VA benefits and process claims more efficiently. Joining me is Ms. Sandra Flint, Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations, Veterans Benefits Administration.

A whole lifecycle approach to claims processing

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs' vision for historic backlog reduction has led to significant improvements in Compensation and Pension (C&P) claims processing. VA continues to build upon the record-breaking 3 million C&P claims completed in fiscal year (FY) 2025. VA has completed nearly 1,418,000 disability claims in FY 2026 through March 22, 2026. VA reached 1 million completions on February 2, 2026, earlier than any prior fiscal year. With increased productivity, VA has also ensured accuracy rates have increased to 93.95%, the highest 12-month issue-based accuracy rate in 2 years, while the average days to complete have dropped 42% to 81 days since the beginning of the second Trump administration.

These notable production achievements have led to historic reductions in the rating backlog. As of March 18, 2026, the rating backlog is below 90,000, a 66%

decrease from January 20, 2025. These are levels which have not been achieved since May 2020.

VA has also demonstrated a strong commitment to improving benefit delivery for survivors. Both Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) and Survivors Pension inventories have been significantly reduced over the past year. By prioritizing resources, VA achieved a 68.1% reduction in the DIC inventory, lowering pending claims from 29,299 on January 20, 2025, to 9,349 on March 22, 2026—a decrease of 19,950. The DIC backlog inventory has been reduced by an astounding 83%. Survivors Pension claims have undergone similar transformative improvements with an 80% decrease in inventory and a 96% reduction in backlog since January 20, 2025.

Additionally, as of March 22, 2026, VA completed DIC claims in an average of 85 days, reflecting an 89-day improvement since January 20, 2025. Similarly, Survivors Pension has seen significant improvements in timely processing over the same period with the average days to complete reduced from 173 days to 73 days.

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) achieved these milestones through relentless leadership commitment to results-driven resource strategies, such as targeted use of overtime and automation assist tools. Automated Decision Support tools reduce administrative actions while National Work Queue (NWQ) modernization efforts focus on advancing work queue capabilities. Furthermore, these accomplishments reflect strong leadership and sound strategy and the extraordinary dedication of VBA's employees, about half of whom are Veterans. Their firsthand understanding of military service and its impact strengthens our ability to deliver benefits with both precision and compassion, adding momentum to keep improving service to Veterans, their families, and survivors.

A Robust Culture of Continuous Improvement.

VA continues to optimize technology and improve claims processing quality. Continued expansion of NWQ functionality will focus on improved capability to route claims more efficiently. Additionally, VA hosts Quality Sprint Days to affirm VA's commitment and focus on quality, highlighting the Department's commitment to accuracy of outcomes for those we serve. VA's approach to systematically analyze

outcomes to identify recurring quality issues and root causes supports targeted corrective actions to address deficiencies.

Conclusion

VA remains committed to identifying areas where we can improve our systems and processes to increase the efficiency and quality of benefits delivery to the Nation's Veterans, their families, and survivors. We remain steadfast in our commitment to timely and accurate decisions.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement. I thank you and the Committee for your continued support of programs that serve the Nation's Veterans and look forward to working together to further enhance delivery of benefits and services. My colleague and I are prepared to respond to any questions that you and other Members of the Committee may have.