

**STATEMENT OF  
DANIELLE A. RUNYAN  
SENIOR COUNSELOR TO THE SECRETARY,  
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA)  
BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
ON  
EXPANDING THE MISSION: THE FUTURE OF THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR  
WARRIOR INDEPENDENCE IN WEST LOS ANGELES (LA)**

Chairman Bost, Ranking Member Takano, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to discuss the work VA is doing to implement President Donald J. Trump's Executive Order, Keeping Promises to Veterans and Establishing a National Center for Warrior Independence (NCWI).

For generations, VA's West Los Angeles (LA) campus has held the unrealized potential to be a beacon of hope and stability for thousands of Veterans. Under the leadership of President Trump and VA Secretary Douglas A. Collins, this potential is finally on the way to being achieved.

And it is about time, as the mismanagement of this campus dates back more than 130 years.

In 1888, Arcadia Bandini de Stearns Baker and Senator John P. Jones gifted hundreds of acres of land to the Government for the purpose of providing a home and community for disabled Veterans. It was meant to be a place where Civil War Veterans could live out the rest of their days in peace.

But this goal was never fully realized. Some housing was built, but over the years, large portions of the campus were deeded away, and other parcels were used in ways that did not benefit Veterans.

VA Inspector General (IG) reports in 2018 and 2021 concluded the property was being mismanaged. The IG determined that various agreements that allowed outside

parties to use parts of the campus did not comply with the West LA Leasing Act, other applicable Federal laws, or the draft master plan.

In May 2025, President Trump issued his Executive Order to turn this property around. It called on VA to vastly expand the capacity of this campus to house thousands of Veterans at the new NCWI by January 1, 2028. Here's what we've done to get there.

In February 2026, [VA terminated illegal and wasteful \(https://news.va.gov/press-room/va-terminates-illegal-and-wasteful-west-los-angeles-vamc-leases-and-license/\)](https://news.va.gov/press-room/va-terminates-illegal-and-wasteful-west-los-angeles-vamc-leases-and-license/) West LA leases and a license under which the campus allowed the Brentwood School, Safety Park Corporation, and Bridgeland Resources, LLC to use land in ways that served no meaningful benefit to Veterans. Bridgeland, for example, is operating oil wells on this land.

It is bad enough that this campus was being leased out in ways that provided no benefits to Veterans. But even worse, these agreements underpaid VA for the fair value of these properties by more than \$40 million per year. To sum it up, these leases were ripping off Veterans and ripping off U.S. taxpayers.

The ongoing litigation in this area limits our ability to discuss these matters further. But we continue to do everything we can to reclaim the land at our West LA campus so we can fulfill the requirements of President Trump's order.

In the meantime, VA is taking important steps to establish the NCWI and build the infrastructure we need to host thousands of Veterans at this site.

- When we arrived in January 2025, the campus had the capacity to house 955 Veterans.
- In January 2026, our capacity to provide housing to formerly homeless veterans expanded to 1,377 Veterans.
- By the end of 2026, we expect to have capacity to house 1,670 formerly homeless Veterans, thanks mostly to our plan to build temporary housing this year for another 220 Veterans.
- By the end of 2027, we expect to have beds for 2,048 homeless Veterans.

Meanwhile, VA is putting in place the infrastructure we need to handle an increased Veteran population. For example, VA is enhancing safety measures on campus to give Veterans the secure space they need to successfully achieve independence.

We are also increasing the level of service we give to Veterans who are already living on campus. Among other things, VA has:

- Made Homeless Patient Aligned Care Team services available to all Veterans for clinical care;
- Provided case management support to help Veterans as they seek housing vouchers with the Department of Housing and Urban Development; and
- Terminated the lease of the Wadsworth Chapel on the West LA campus to ensure it can serve Veterans of faith.

These efforts and others have helped ensure that 98% of the Veterans on this campus remain housed and do not return to the streets.

Our goal is to give Veterans a fair chance to succeed in the country they sacrificed so much to defend. In West LA, we are building a campus that unifies housing, clinical health care, mental health care, and benefits for some of the Nation's most vulnerable Veterans. When we succeed, the campus will serve as a destination for thousands of homeless Veterans across the Nation and a place where they can get the care they need, obtain sustainable employment, and achieve financial independence.

Thank you for supporting this important project, and I look forward to your questions.