



**IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN  
VETERANS OF AMERICA**

**Statement of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans Of America**  
*before the*  
**House Committee on Veterans Affairs**  
**Health Subcommittee**

**July 9, 2013**

<b>Bill #</b>	<b>Bill Name</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Position</b>
Draft Legislation	Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act	Miller	Support
H.R. 1443	Tinnitus Research and Treatment Act	Michaud	Support
H.R. 1612	Bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to convey a parcel of land in Tuskegee, Alabama, to Tuskegee University, etc.	Rogers	No Position
H.R. 1702	Veterans Transportation Service Act	Barber	Support
H.R. 2065	Safe Housing for Homeless Veterans Act	McKinley	Support

Chairman Benishek, Ranking Member Brownley, and Distinguished Members of the Subcommittee:

On behalf of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), I would like to extend our gratitude for being given the opportunity to share with you our views and recommendations regarding these pieces of legislation.

IAVA is the nation's first and largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization for veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and their supporters. Founded in 2004, our mission is important but simple – to improve the lives of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans and their families. With a steadily growing base of nearly 270,000 members and supporters, we strive to help create a society that honors and supports veterans of all generations.

IAVA believes that all veterans must have access to quality health care and related services. The men and women who volunteer to serve in our nation's military do so with the understanding that they and their families will be cared for during their period of service, and also after their period of service should they sustain injuries or disabilities while serving.



### Draft Legislation

IAVA would support this draft bill, the Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act, which would authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to allow veterans in need of nursing home care, at the request of the veteran, to utilize private care arrangements that meet VA standards. This legislation seeks to give veterans who are unable to care for themselves the opportunity to receive the regular health care they need and have earned in a setting that is more familiar, more comfortable, more family-friendly, and often more dignified. IAVA supports this bill because it seeks to increase veterans' choices regarding their healthcare options, which will improve their overall quality of life.

### H.R. 1443

IAVA supports H.R. 1443, the Tinnitus Research and Treatment Act of 2013, which would call on the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to recognize tinnitus as a mandatory condition for treatment, research, and prevention study by VA Auditory Centers of Excellence. The bill would also ensure VA cooperation with DoD to further research on tinnitus.

A report issued last year by the VA showed that 10% of all disability claims filed in FY2011 were due to tinnitus, making it the most common disability claim issue the VA faces. Hundreds of thousands of veterans and service members suffer from this issue to varying degrees, including a number of IAVA's own staff and many of its members. IAVA supports this bill because mandating research on the treatment and prevention of the most common disability claim issue the VA faces represents a common sense approach to veteran health care, which will benefit not only today's veterans but future veterans as well.

### H.R. 1612

IAVA has no position on H.R. 1612, which would direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to convey approximately 64.5 acres of land to Tuskegee University.

### H.R.1702

IAVA supports H.R. 1702, the Veterans Transportation Service Act, which would give the Secretary of Veterans Affairs permanent authority to transport individuals to and from VA facilities for vocational rehabilitation services and for counseling and medical appointments. The authority that this bill seeks to make permanent is set to expire in January of 2014. Making this authority permanent would ensure that the VA can continue to provide a valuable service to those veterans who need it. IAVA supports this bill because its goal is to maximize access to VA facilities for veterans who may not otherwise have the wherewithal to reach the services they need and deserve.



### H.R. 2065

IAVA supports H.R. 2065, the Safe Housing for Homeless Veterans Act, which would require those facilities that receive per diem payments from the VA for the purpose of providing services to homeless veterans to have their facilities certified annually as being up to local, state, and federal fire and safety codes.

One in four homeless Americans is a veteran. While the nation and the VA combat this unacceptable reality with outreach programs and by continuing to address veteran financial hardships, it is still important to ensure that assistance given to homeless veterans by organizations funded through the VA is provided in safe environments. IAVA supports this bill because it aims to increase accountability for organizations entrusted with providing services to America's homeless veterans, ensuring that these individuals are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Mr. Chairman, we at IAVA again appreciate the opportunity to offer our views on these important pieces of legislation, and we look forward to continuing to work with each of you, your staff, and the Subcommittee to improve the lives of veterans and their families.

Thank you for your time and attention.