

Statement for the Record
of
VIETNAM VETERANS of AMERICA



Presented By

John Rowan

National President

Before the

Subcommittee on Health

House Veterans' Affairs Committee

Regarding

**Draft Legislation, the Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act,
H.R. 1443, H.R. 1612, H.R. 1702, & H.R. 2065**

July 9, 2013

Chairman Benishek, Ranking Member Brownley, and distinguished members of the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health, Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) appreciates the opportunity to offer this Statement for the Record on pending legislation before this subcommittee.

Draft legislation: Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act: Would authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts for the transfer of certain veterans who are unable to live independently into non-Department adult foster homes.

This seems like a good idea on the face of it, but there just isn't enough detail for VVA to support this bill at this juncture. For example, what is the meaning of the phrase “. . . for certain veterans who are unable to live independently”?

Furthermore, the proposed legislation states that “At the request of a veteran for whom the Secretary is required to provide nursing home care under 1710A of this title, the Secretary may transfer the veteran to an adult foster home that meets Department standards at the expense of the United States” Who will decide which type of facility (and where) the veteran can choose to be transferred to? Currently there is a variety of facility options currently recognized by the VA, such as an adult family home, an assisted living facility, a community nursing home, a medical foster home, a state veterans home, or a community living center, and each of these options has separate eligibility criteria, including the veteran's income level.

This proposed draft legislation needs far more detail before VVA can give further consideration of support. The issue, though, is of high import to us, inasmuch as Vietnam-era veterans now constitute the largest living cohort of elderly American veterans.

H.R.1443: Tinnitus Research and Treatment Act of 2013; introduced by Congressman Michael Michaud (ME-2): would direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to: 1) recognize tinnitus as a mandatory condition for research and treatment by Department of Veterans Affairs Auditory Centers of Excellence; 2) ensure that research is conducted at VA facilities on the prevention and treatment of tinnitus; and 3) ensure VA cooperation with the Hearing Center of Excellence established by the Department of Defense

(DoD) to further research on tinnitus. **VVA supports H.R. 1443.**

H.R.1612: To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to convey a specified parcel real property at 2400 Hospital Road in Tuskegee, Alabama, to Tuskegee University, for the purpose of permitting the university to use the property to further the educational and general welfare of its students; **introduced by Congressman Mike Rogers, (AL-3).**

The Tuskegee Airmen were the most highly respected African American troops of World War II, the University of Alabama donated 300 acres of land to build a hospital solely to care for black veterans in the South and today that hospital is the Tuskegee Veterans Affairs Medical Center. In February 2013 the Tuskegee VAMC celebrated 90 years of service to veterans and their families. In honor of the Tuskegee Airmen's service and sacrifice to our nation, **VVA supports H.R. 1612.**

H.R.1702: Veterans Transportation Service Act; introduced by Congressman Ron Barber (AZ-2); makes permanent (under current law, expires on January 10, 2014) the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to transport individuals to and from facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs in connection with vocational rehabilitation, counseling, examination, treatment, or care. **VVA supports making this provision of the law permanent.**

H.R.2065: Safe Housing for Homeless Veterans Act; introduced by Congressman David McKinley (WV-1); would require recipients of per diem payments for the provision of services for homeless veterans to comply with codes relevant to operations and level of care provided.

The VA Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program provides grants and per diem payment assisting public and nonprofit organizations in establishing and operating supportive housing and service centers for homeless veterans. When enacted into law, H.R 2065 would mandate that these public and nonprofits organizations are in compliance with Life Safety Code of the National Fire Protection Association and other requirements as stated in Section 61.20 Life Safety Code Capital Grants in the VA Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program regulations. **VVA**

applauds Congressman McKinley for introducing this legislation and supports H.R. 2065 as written.

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Health VVA would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit our Statement for the Record on legislation that would improve the quality of life for veterans and their families before this subcommittee today.

JOHN ROWAN

John Rowan was elected National President of Vietnam Veterans of America at VVA's Twelfth National Convention in Reno, Nevada, in August 2005.

John enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1965, two years after graduating from high school in Queens, New York. He went to language school, where he learned Indonesian and Vietnamese. He served with the Air Force's 6990 the Security Squadron in Vietnam and at Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, helping to direct bombing missions.

After his honorable discharge, John began college in 1969. He received a BA in political science from Queens College and a Masters in urban affairs at Hunter College. Following his graduation from Queens College, John worked in the district office of Rep. Ben Rosenthal for two years. He then worked as an investigator for the New York City Council and recently retired from his job as an investigator with the New York City Comptroller's office.

Prior to his election as VVA's National President, John served as a VVA veterans' service representative in New York City. John has been one of the most active and influential members of VVA since the organization was founded in 1978. He was a founding member and the first president of VVA Chapter 32 in Queens. He served as the chairman of VVA's Conference of State Council Presidents for three terms on the national Board of Directors, and as president of VVA's New York State Council.

He lives in Middle Village, New York, with his wife, Mariann.

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
Funding Statement

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The national organization Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) is a non-profit veterans' membership organization registered as a 501(c) (19) with the Internal Revenue Service. VVA is also appropriately registered with the Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Representatives in compliance with the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995.

VVA is not currently in receipt of any federal grant or contract, other than the routine allocation of office space and associated resources in VA Regional Offices for outreach and direct services through its Veterans Benefits Program (Service Representatives).

This is also true of the previous two fiscal years.

For Further Information, Contact:

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