

Honorable Jackie Walorski

Opening Statement

HVAC O&I Hearing – “Legislative Hearing on: H.R. 1490, ‘The Veterans’ Privacy Act;’ H.R. 1792, ‘The Infectious Disease Reporting Act;’ and H.R. 1804, ‘The Foreign Travel Accountability Act.’”

Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, it’s an honor to serve on this committee.

I thank you for holding this legislative hearing to advance pending legislation which will improve oversight of certain VA programs and practices. This will ultimately result in strengthening the quality of care for our veterans.

I also want to thank the veteran service organizations testifying today and those in attendance. Your resolve to bring attention to inefficiencies and significant shortcomings within the VA has not gone unnoticed. Because of you, this committee has committed itself to ensuring the VA continually improves the services you have earned.

Through hearings this committee has held and through the work of countless individuals seeking to better the VA, a number of critical issues have arisen which must be addressed. The legislation my colleagues have brought before us today addresses many of the concerns raised by veterans and the oversight work of this committee.

Outside of the headquarters of the VA, there exist the words of President Abraham Lincoln, “To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan.”¹ The VA must not waiver in its obligation to our nation’s veterans.

I look forward to working with my colleagues and our panelists on this legislation before us.

Thank you.

¹ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, “The Origina of the VA Motto: Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address.”
<http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/celebrate/vamotto.pdf>.