

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS**



House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs

Statement for the Record on H.R. 7443 Veterans Claim Transparency Act of 2020

July 16, 2020

Chairwoman Luria, Ranking Member Bost and members of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, on behalf of the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers (NACVSO) and our 1,766 members from local governmental offices from across the Nation, thank you for the opportunity to provide a statement regarding H.R. 7063 “Veterans Transparency Act of 2020”.

NACVSO’s mission is to aggressively pursue all benefits for veterans and eligible family members. Our members fulfill this mission as accredited representatives by assisting with the development and research of disability claims, their submittal, and the reviewing of claims to ensure the accuracy of their adjudication. Although much of our members effort is targeted at the beginning of process, their intervention on behalf of the claimant during any part of the process is vital to ensure an accurate decision is made.

Historically, the 48-hour review period that was available to a veteran’s accredited representative was used to review and verify the accuracy of the proposed decision, catch potential errors, and to provide feedback to the VA before the claim became final. This review period increased the likelihood that claims decisions were accurate and less likely to be appealed. The 48-hour review was a useful VA policy that provided oversight within the claim process for the benefit of the veteran claimant as well as the VA.

The decision was made to remove the 48-hr review period before NACVSO, the organization that represents the most local governmental accredited veteran

representatives in the Country, was notified of the change in policy. Our exclusion from the dialogue regarding the policy, its removal coming during the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent decision to remove VA Disability Benefit Questionnaires (DBQs) from public facing sites, demonstrates a growing disconnect between VA and its VSO stakeholders. NACVSO along with fellow VSOs sent letters to VA Secretary Robert Wilkie and President Donald Trump but the matter has not been resolved. Action is needed by Congress to right this wrong, which is why NACVSO applauds the introduction of the “Veterans Transparency Act of 2020”, we ask that members of this Committee do everything in their power to aid in its passage and swift implementation.

Chairwoman Luria, Ranking Member Bost and Members of the Committee, on behalf of NACVSO and its members we appreciate the opportunity to submit a statement for the record regarding this matter and your willingness to review the “Veterans Transparency Act of 2020”. Working together, we can help improve veteran’s experiences and outcomes during the disability claims process *all* while ensuring maximum VA accountability to the constituents they are tasked with serving.

Respectfully,

Herman K. Breuer
Combat Wounded Veteran
NACVSO President


Michael L. McLaughlin
NACVSO Legislative Chair