

Statement for the Record by Representative Tim Ryan in support of H.R. 4601 – The Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act before the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs – October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021

I would like to personally thank Chairwoman Luria and Ranking Member Nehls for bringing H.R. 4601 before the Subcommittee today.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this important legislation. Veteran Service Organizations (VSO) are on the front lines across my district, the state of Ohio, and the nation every single day. Simply put, they are “force multipliers.” By providing programming for veterans in their communities, organizing events to raise money for veterans, and providing access to accredited veterans service representatives to assist veterans when they apply for VA benefits, they bridge the gap between those that have served and the VA.

Unfortunately, VSOs are not eligible to receive federal funding to support their vital outreach activities. Instead, they are often forced to cobble together the resources they need to do their jobs from a variety of state, county, or private funding sources. This just doesn’t make any sense. These organizations work day in and day out to help our nation’s heroes navigate a federal bureaucracy that can be overwhelming. So why isn’t the federal government providing them the resources they need to do their jobs?

This bill will finally right this wrong by authorizing \$50 million annually for five years for competitive grants to expand the work of these vital organizations. Importantly, grants will be awarded to states, which are in the best position to know exactly where additional resources are needed to support their veteran communities.

I’ve always been a relentless supporter of our nation’s veterans who have time and time again selflessly answered their nation’s call. Congress has a duty to take care of those that have served. I’m glad to see this Subcommittee doing its part to help fulfill that duty here today.

Again, thank you Chairwoman Luria and Ranking Member Nehls for calling up this legislation; I urge all Members of the Subcommittee to support this bill. I also look forward to seeing it advance out of the full Committee and pass the House in a bipartisan matter. All of us in Congress must do our duty.