



SERVING THOSE WHO SERVED

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Jennifer Winter Joiner
Program Director

June 13, 2023

Dear Chairman Van Orden and Ranking Member Levin,

I submit this statement for the record to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity's Legislative Hearing on behalf of **U.S.VETS – Long Beach**, which has provided **Grant and Per Diem services** in Long Beach, California for over 20 years. Our site currently is operating **181 beds** and prides itself on getting our homeless Veterans off the streets, gaining permanent housing, jobs, and reconnecting to a meaningful purpose.

We thank you for the bipartisan work your Committee partook in to enhance the per diem rate during the public health emergency. During the health emergency, our nightly per diem rate increased to **\$152.73** per night from our pre-pandemic rate of **\$48.50**. This allowed us to quarantine COVID-positive veterans off-site in hotels and provide them meals and needed supplies while they were in isolation, hire private security to assist with the safety of veterans and staff, hire an LVN to conduct COVID testing, complete wellness checks, provide necessary PPE gear for all staff, and prepare individual boxed meals for veterans staying in our program.

The recent decrease at the end of the PHE dropped our rate to \$64.52. The decreased GPD rate paired with the inflated costs of goods and services has required us to cut security, increase the cost of meals, transfer staff out of the GPD program, and cut on-site nursing staff. The new post-pandemic GPD rate is not sustainable in our current market.

We appreciate the intent of H.R. 3848, to restore section 4201 assistance, which has been critical, and to increase the per diem rate to **\$133%**. However, having this ceiling on funding would still require us to decrease services, raise meal costs, and potentially layoff staff.

We support access to reimbursement in H.R. 491 to allow us to restore levels of services and supports the veterans we serve have earned, and the level of services that are required to successfully operate this grant.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at 562-200-7303.

Very Respectfully Submitted,

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