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Written Testimony for the Record
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity
"Strengthening the Workforce of Veterans in America"
December 2, 2025

Chairman Van Orden, Ranking Member Pappas, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony for the record on behalf of the University of Health and Performance (UHP). My name is Matt Hesse, and I am the CEO of UHP, a vocational school located in Gentry, Arkansas. Our institution is dedicated exclusively to empowering former servicemembers as they transition to civilian life, providing them with the skills, certifications, and community support needed to thrive in high-demand, non-traditional industries. I appreciate the Subcommittee's focus on exploring alternative career pathways for veterans beyond the traditional four-year degree, and I am eager to share how UHP's innovative model contributes to strengthening America's veteran workforce and boosting our economy.

UHP was founded with a singular mission: to serve those who have served our nation. We focus exclusively on former servicemembers, creating a tailored educational environment that honors their unique experiences and needs. Unlike conventional programs, UHP replicates the structure and intensity of active military training to ease the transition out of service. Our programs prepare veterans for missions in civilian life, emphasizing short-duration, high-intensity coursework in areas such as personal training, integrative health coaching, and culinary nutrition. This compressed, immersive approach allows students to complete their training in just 18 days—or 140 hours—compared to the months or years required in traditional four-year degree programs or even standard semester-based vocational schools. By condensing the timeline without sacrificing quality, we enable veterans to quickly enter the workforce, often within weeks of separation from service, addressing the critical first-year post-separation period when many utilize their GI Bill benefits.

What sets UHP apart is our veteran-centric model, which not only delivers practical skills but also fosters fellowship and wellness through a community of peers. Veterans train alongside other veterans in a supportive, familiar environment that cultivates the values they adopted during their time in service—discipline, resilience, and camaraderie. This shared experience promotes mental and physical wellness, helping participants rebuild confidence and purpose. Our dedicated staff, many of whom are veterans themselves, serve as positive role models, creating a space where students can sustain and build upon the productive habits honed in the military. The result is not just skill acquisition, but holistic personal growth, as veterans find renewed motivation and a sense of belonging that traditional educational settings often fail to provide.

Our success metrics demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach. Based on survey data from our graduates:

- 91 percent are employed following completion of the program.
- 35 percent work directly in the health and fitness fields.

- 37 percent report an increase in income after graduating, with 93 percent passing accreditation exams on their first attempt.
- 98 percent describe the program as "effective and valuable."
- 78 percent apply UHP's core framework—"Think, Train, Feel, and Lead"—in their daily lives.
- 98 percent have referred or would refer a friend to UHP.

These outcomes highlight how UHP equips veterans with marketable certifications and real-world readiness, leading to meaningful careers in high-paying industries that align with their strengths.

In conclusion, programs like UHP are vital for expanding non-traditional educational opportunities. UHP exemplifies how targeted, accelerated training can empower veterans to build prosperous civilian careers, strengthen our economy, and enhance their overall well-being through community and purpose. I urge the Subcommittee to support policies that promote these alternative pathways, ensuring more veterans can access the opportunities they deserve.

Thank you for your time and commitment to our nation's heroes.