

REMARKS/QUESTIONS (5 MIN)

Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity Oversight Hearing:
"Bounce Houses, Drones, and Massage Chairs: A Review of VA's Purchase
History in the Veteran Readiness and Employment Program"
Thursday, April 16, 2026 — 2:00 PM — 360 CHOB

Rep. Abraham J. Hamadeh

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Our government has a sacred obligation to be a faithful steward of every dollar it takes from the American people. Taxpayers work hard for that money, and they trust us not to squander it. When Washington breaks that trust, it is the job of this Committee to stand up and say so. Waste, fraud, and abuse are not abstractions. They are a betrayal. And of all the ways the federal government can betray the public trust, none is more offensive than wasting a single penny meant for the men and women who wore the uniform. A penny diverted from a disabled veteran is the worst kind of abuse there is.

That is why we are here today. The VR&E program exists for one reason: to help disabled veterans return to work and reclaim their independence. That is a promise America made, and it is a promise worth keeping. But this Committee has uncovered purchases inside this program that are flat-out indefensible. \$15,500 for a single massage chair. \$50,000 in fish hatchery supplies... for ONE veteran. \$23,827 on bounce houses. A \$266,000 laptop order. And here is the real kicker: 189 individual plans exceeding \$100,000

apiece, with no meaningful oversight of the contracts being written. A program on pace to hit \$4.7 billion by FY 2027 cannot be run like a slush fund, and a 45% re-entry rate after **[QUOTE]** “successful” completion is not success — it is a revolving door. Arizona veterans and the taxpayers footing the bill deserve better. It’s time someone minds the store.