

TESTIMONY OF JAMES P. MCGOVERN (MA-02)  
FISCAL YEAR 2024 DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT

SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
March 9, 2023

Thank you, Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum, for giving me this opportunity to talk to you about one of my priorities for the FY 2024 Defense Appropriations Act.

I respectfully ask that the Committee provide \$16 million for the Wounded Warrior Service Dog Program. Since FY 2015, this Committee has led the way in creating and funding this program that provides grants to qualified non-profits to offset the costs of training service dogs for our veterans. This modest increase will allow the program to deal with inflationary costs and other increased expenses and expand to new, qualified grant applicants.

Already, we have seen so many incredible success stories in which these dogs have helped veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress or physical limitations to reintegrate into the social framework of their families and communities and often reduce their reliance on prescription drugs.

Over the past few years, I've had the opportunity to spend time at the National Education for Assistance Dog Services – or NEADS – located in Princeton, Massachusetts. Like similar non-profits, NEADS customizes each dog's training to serve its future owner. Dogs can be trained to retrieve medicine from a refrigerator, turn the lights on and scan an empty house before the owner enters, guard an owner's back in a public setting, and even wake up an owner from a nightmare.

Thanks to your support, the Wounded Warrior Service Dog Program has allowed these non-profits to help hundreds of additional veterans and service members. Yet, we continue to see increased demand and delays. Rather than relegating those in need to a waiting list, let's continue supporting these highly technical non-profits so they can continue to do what they do best – help our veterans.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm happy to hear any comments and take any questions you might have for me.