Introduction (15 Seconds)

- Thank you Chairman Roe and Ranking Member Walz for providing me with the opportunity to speak to you about an important issue impacting many of our veterans.

Overview on PFAS (1 Minute)

- I represent Oscoda, Michigan, a small community that contains the former Wurtsmith Air Force base, which was closed during a round of BRAC more than twenty years ago.

- Oscoda has been working to recover from the impact caused by the closure of its base as well as dealing with some legacy issues caused by the base’s operations.

- For many decades, the DoD has used a class of chemicals called PFAS in its firefighting foam.

- While PFAS is very good at quickly putting out fires, it is a toxic chemical that causes negative health affects in humans.

- In Oscoda, the Defense Department’s firefighting foam has leached into the groundwater around the former base and contaminated drinking water for residents nearby.
Resident of the town and Wurtsmith’s military families unknowingly drank this contaminated groundwater for years.

Health Care for Veterans Legislation (1.5 Minutes)

- I know this committee has been looking at how we take care of our veterans who have been exposed to toxic chemicals.

- Many of these chemicals we know a lot about, including Agent Orange, PCBs and TCE.

- PFAS, on the other hand, is a new group of chemicals where there is a small—yet growing and concerning—amount of research being done on them.

- The exposure to PFAS has already been linked to cancer, as well as thyroid, kidney, liver, heart and reproductive problems.

- That is why in last year’s NDAA, I pushed to include a requirement that the DoD study the health impacts of PFAS on service members. I was happy to see this health study included in the final bill.

- It is estimated that this study will take 5-7 years to be completed. Once it is completed, we will know more about
the health issues associated with exposure to these chemicals.

- As soon as we know what the health issues of PFAS exposure are, the VA Committee should move to pass legislation immediately to consider those conditions as service-connected illnesses, and the VA should provide the impacted veterans with health coverage.

- Many veterans are already facing costly medical bills because of health issues associated with PFAS exposure. These veterans need our help.

- I have been working with the committee, especially my friend and colleague from Michigan, Congressman Bergman, on this issue to ensure we get the veterans the health care they need.

- I look forward to working with you on passing legislation that would ensure veterans exposed to PFAS have the health coverage they need.

**Conclusion (15 Seconds)**

- Thank you for providing me with time to speak today about PFAS and getting veterans the health care they need.

- This is a problem that is not isolated to my district – many members of Congress, in both the House and the Senate,
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are dealing with this issue.

• I look forward to working with the committee on this.