



May 15, 2026

Chairman Mike Bost
House Committee on Veterans Affairs
364 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Mark Takano
House Committee on Veterans Affairs
550 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman Bost & Ranking Member Takano,

Thank you for holding the hearing "Expanding the Mission: Future of the National Center for Warrior Independence in West LA" on May 13, 2026.

Chairman Bost correctly pointed out that the 120-day Action Plan submitted by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for the record was sorely delayed. The President's Executive Order does not state that an Action Plan for the National Center for Warrior Independence would be submitted to Congress, or the American public, within 120-days.

However, VA did publish two different FY27 VA Budget proposals in March and April 2026 requesting your assistance in carrying out the President's Executive Order before giving Congress an opportunity to review the Administration's plan. This delay prevented both Congress, and veterans, from having an informed discussion about VA's FY 2027 Budget Submission.

1) FY 2027 Budget Submission

In both budget proposals, page 2-7 of Volume 4 provided a top line budget ask of \$500 million associated with the National Center for Warrior Independence. Regrettably, I must inform you that VA's own calculation is inaccurate. The total sum of projects identified on page 2-7 is not \$500 million. It is \$509.3 million, a variance of \$9.3 million or 1.86%. Some might argue that this is couch change for Congress, but as a budgeting exercise, every dollar counts against a national debt that is about to eclipse \$39 trillion.

Skipping just three pages later (2-10), VA identifies three additional projects that were not included in the top line number of \$500 million available on 2-7. These three projects include: Historic Rehabilitation of Wadsworth Chapel, Renovate Building 212 to Sober-Living Transitional Housing, and Construct Administration Building 306.

In the March 2026 submission, there is little information provided about the nature of these projects although Total Estimated Costs are found much later on page 6.2-18. To VA's credit, this additional project information was provided in the April 2026 update found on pages 4-7, 4-15 and 4-23. All three projects attempt to repurpose previously appropriated and authorized funds but do not disclose programs that may be impacted by granting VA's request.

As presented to Congress, the Total Estimated Cost for the National Center for Warrior Independence is not \$500 million or \$509.3 million, but \$721,700,000 when considering new and requests for previously authorized funds. That's real money. Although I am grateful that VA



included West Los Angeles, and efforts to modernize the historic property in service to veterans, I believe it is fair to question which of these projects must take priority.

I intended to provide Congress with my interpretation of which projects should take priority. Unfortunately, it would largely be a waste of time or irrelevant as I have now had a brief opportunity following the hearing to compare VA's FY27 budget proposal with the 120-day Action Plan.

Nine of the 10 construction projects submitted to Congress in the FY27 Budget are not identified in the Future Site Map on page 11 of the 120-day Action Plan. In other words, if proposed projects in the budget were aligned with the Future Site Map, arguably we should only see a request for Building 306 totaling \$82 million. Nowhere does the 120-day Action Plan disclose, for example, plans for a \$98.1 million parking garage or theatre renovations. That's not intended to be a judgement call on those specific projects, but an indicating factor that VA's budget submission and the 120-day Action Plan are disjointed.

Furthermore, VA is requesting an additional \$98 million to renovate Building 212 when, in 2019, it previously informed Congress that it would do so with funds appropriated in FY16 (Refer to FY20 Vol 4 page 2-10). What happened to these previously appropriated funds?

Similarly, why is there an additional ask for infrastructure on campus when VA shared in 2023 that \$361 million from the PACT Act was directed at VA West Los Angeles for infrastructure? Is that money already depleted? Mr. Van Orden put his finger on the pulse. VA's financial stewardship of this project has become a boondoggle. This budget request, frankly, puts it over the top.

These are major discrepancies that I ask you and your staff to review in the weeks ahead. I also wanted to take a moment to shed some light on what I believe to be a considerable opportunity for progress given the President's mandate to establish a National Center for Warrior Independence.

2) A Joint Plan for Warrior Independence in West Los Angeles

In the FY27 Budget, VA is seeking a combined \$297 million to modernize its existing Domiciliary and Community Living Center (CLC) programs at VA West Los Angeles. VA's plan, as proposed, would include "temporary relocation of CLC patients and staff" although it does not provide specifics about how to address veteran patients currently receiving care in the Domiciliary program. The preferred alternative discusses "continuity of existing operations and clinical programming onsite during renovation" but what does that mean exactly? One interpretation is that veterans will be subjected to receiving treatment while the buildings are actively being renovated. Another is that veterans will be moved to other facilities on campus while renovations are underway. I submit both scenarios are unnecessary and unacceptable.

Each of the project funding packages include a set of "Alternatives to Construction Considered", including a preferred alternative. Currently VA's preference is renovation for all four buildings.

There is one alternative scenario I'd like to spotlight for further consideration. *Alternative 6: Collaboration with the Department of Defense for a Joint Facility* (also referred to as Department of War elsewhere in the Budget) discusses a potential new joint facility with DoD / DoW in the vicinity of the existing VA Medical Center (VAMC). Unfortunately, the analysis discounts the



concept citing the nearest installation, Los Angeles Air Force Base, being 11 miles away. But, I must inform you, this is inaccurate.

The nearest DoD / DoW location, the West Los Angeles U.S. Army Reserve Center, is collocated on the same federal property approximately 1,100 feet from the VAMC front door. Like VA's Domiciliary and Community Living Center, the U.S. Army Reserve Center is beginning to show its age. More importantly, the U.S. Army Reserve Center is physically located on the original 300-acre land grant provided to house disabled veterans in 1888. The National Center for Warrior Independence could be an opportunity for VA and DoD / DoW to work in concert restoring the land to its primary mission. Not as a military installation, but serving veterans following their honorable service to our nation. It is unfortunate that DoD / DoW was not identified as a federal partner in the 120-day Action Plan. This was a missed opportunity.

I ask that you work with your colleagues on the House and Senate Armed Services Committees as well as partners in The White House, Office of Management and Budget and Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, to find the U.S. Army Reserve Center a new home. Perhaps nine miles away at the nearest reserve facility or further south with its command element at Joint Forces Training Base (JFTB) Los Alamitos.

This will pave the way for VA to establish the National Center for Warrior Independence as a world-class Domiciliary and Community Living Center program on the site of the former Reserve Center. After a difficult start with shared electronic medical records, this partnership would emphasize that the two agencies can work together, with unity of purpose and without disrupting current treatment programs or forcing veterans to relocate. Reservists would do what they do best: mobilize to meet the mission. Veterans would focus on recovery and self-sufficiency until new construction is completed and ready for occupancy.

3) Public safety conditions must improve before adding housing capacity

Without improved public safety, recovery will be an uphill battle for veterans seeking refuge at VA West Los Angeles no matter how new the setting. During the past few weeks, I have received several calls from veteran residents and staff citing security concerns. In full disclosure, in response to those complaints and prior to the hearing, I FOIA'd the past five years of VA Incident Reports on campus (#26-20098-F).

Campus security was a known and foreseeable problem that VA has failed to adequately prepare for jeopardizing the health and safety of veterans. I say this as someone who requested the August 2019 briefing from VAGLAHS' Chief of Police during my time on the Veterans and Community Oversight and Engagement Board (VCOEB). It was a small but good faith effort to get VA thinking proactively about safety in anticipation of the community that would soon arrive. That day has come.

At Wednesday's hearing we heard testimony that VA is currently staffed at approximately 83 officers with a potential increase up to 165 officers. I would ask that the Committee clarify if those figures are specific to VA West Los Angeles Medical Center or VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System as a whole. There is a material difference between the two service areas with a direct impact on response time in the event of a crisis.

I largely agree with Mr. Kennedy's remarks during the hearing. It is not clear to me at this time that adding additional capacity makes sense when current residents and staff are concerned for



their safety. VA should reconsider its current plans and first demonstrate that it has the ability to protect those who serve or served. This includes full transparency with public safety data so all parties are confident the current situation is being managed appropriately.

Elsewhere in the hearing I was pleased to learn that VA has started a dialogue with the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department (LASD). While it is true LASD has its own staffing issues, I would look to the future as the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority is expected to field its own police force freeing contract capacity at LASD and other local agencies. That does not address the near-term security challenges but, as history demonstrates, planning at VA West Los Angeles takes time and all avenues should be explored.

4) University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) Lease

And I believe there are further avenues worth exploring surrounding VA's relationship with UCLA. In particular, the 120-day Action Plan identifies Buildings 113, 114, and 115 on the north campus as part of the Future Site Map yet we find no request of Congress to replace the current research buildings in FY27's Budget request (or prior requests). VA must vacate these buildings and relocate its functions elsewhere on campus to speed up housing delivery for veterans. Yet, the public record is weak in detailing VA's "Consolidated Research Building" project on the south campus. Here again presents an opportunity for new thinking and collaboration.

First, let me be clear. Jackie Robinson Stadium's days at VA West Los Angeles should be numbered. In fact, the area shouldn't even belong to VA West Los Angeles at all. The land beneath Jackie Robinson Stadium should be transferred to the National Cemetery Administration (NCA). The National Cemetery has already jumped the 405 Freeway in the form of the Urban Initiative, or Columbarium. I believe it should extend even further beyond its artificial boundary to the natural barriers above Constitution Ave.

Current plans for the Columbarium call for 90,000 niches. At present, the site consists of approximately 10,000 niches. Eventually Congress will appropriate funds for NCA to complete site plans for the existing plot where it will need to grow based on veterans' preferences for burial benefits. Until that time comes, I believe UCLA can maintain its current use of the underutilized section of NCA administered land (not VAGLAHS) as a temporary steward in exchange for their assistance in financing and developing the Consolidated Research Building.

UCLA is a leading institution in the field of medical research. And, UCLA has proven itself much more adept at construction management compared to VA. Secretary Collins should lean into this expertise utilizing existing legal authorities, such as the CHIP IN Act, to develop a framework for success with tangible results. The past ten years of service "commitments" included in the existing UCLA lease agreement have yielded suboptimal outcomes and, worse yet, a betrayal of trust. VA should leverage its ownership of the land to extract real value for veterans while, at the same time, offsetting the cost of a new medical facility in Los Angeles.

5) Concerns about further implementation of Master Plan 2022

Finally, Chairman Bost spoke about the need for clear and specific statutory authorization in his opening remarks. The Leasing Act is clear about the VA Secretary's authority to carry out Enhanced Use Leases for supportive housing on the property. I am *still very concerned* VA is violating Section 2(b)1 of the Leasing Act with its ongoing implementation of Master Plan 2022. This issue has been reported to Congress at length in the form of various VCOEB



recommendations over the years. It is disappointing to discover that the 120-day Action Plan appears to be Master Plan 2022 rebranded as the National Center for Warrior Independence. As the expression goes, “lipstick on a pig.”

Two VA Office of Inspector General reports and five federal judges have determined that the agency’s ability to faithfully execute federal law at VA West Los Angeles is less than sterling. I do not believe it is beyond the realm of possibility that VA has planned, in broad daylight, to violate the Leasing Act specific to leases for Buildings 408 and 409 (executed) and 13, 407, and 410 (planned). But don’t take my word for it.

In 2021, VA admitted it did not possess authority to implement mixed-use facilities through its Enhanced Use Lease program prior to adoption of Master Plan 2022 yet signed off on the plan anyway. In August 2022, following approval of Master Plan 2022, the PACT Act did make modifications to VA’s Enhanced Use Lease authority nationwide, but those changes did not, and should not, apply to VA West Los Angeles.

I would encourage members of the House Oversight Committee to look back at the VCOEB record on this issue. The members, a majority of which are required to be veterans, have dutifully carried out the federal advisory committee’s mandate established in the West Los Angeles Leasing Act of 2016.

I believe it is now your turn to take the watch. Please feel free to contact me at anthony@vetsadvocacy.org if I can be of assistance in your oversight of the campus or the National Center for Warrior Independence, whichever form it may take.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Allman".

Anthony Allman
Executive Director
[Vets Advocacy](https://www.vetsadvocacy.org)
U.S. Army, ‘01-03

Past VCOEB Member, ‘17-23