

Statement for the Record of Representative French Hill
(AR-02)
before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
October 22, 2019

Chairwoman Luria, Ranking Member Bost, and members of the Committee:

I appreciate the opportunity to submit this statement in support of Congressman Andy Kim's and my bill, H.R. 4360, the VA Overpayment Accountability Act, and thank you for holding a hearing on this critical issue.

I have heard concerns from many veterans, and the veteran's community throughout Arkansas, regarding the issue of overpayments leading to VA withholding normal benefit checks until the full amount is recouped, for a problem VA created through no fault of the veteran.

Many times, VA withholds entire checks from veterans who may be living on fixed incomes until they have been fully compensated for their mistake. Withholding payment can have severe consequences for veterans who earned these benefits and rely on them to survive month to month.

The VAOIG report from earlier this year reported improper payments at VA totaling over \$14 billion in FY 2018 alone, an increase from the reported \$10.6 billion in FY 2017.

The issue of improper payments and overpayments is getting worse, not better.

Our bill aims to fix these issues by improving VA IT systems that are often the cause of these overpayments. It also provides credit protections for veterans who are the victims of overpayments and become targets of unfair VA practices.

This is vital to our veterans that unknowingly are forced to go without their earned benefits for extended periods of time.

My district is home to many of our brave veterans and service members at Little Rock Air Force Base and Camp Robinson, and they deserve to know that VA isn't withholding benefits through no fault of their own.

I share your commitment to rigorous oversight to protect the men and women who sacrificed and served our country and will hold those who undermine the mission of the VA accountable.

Thank you again for holding this critical hearing and putting the care of our Nation's veterans above all else.