

Statement for the Record  
Representative W. Gregory Steube (FL-17)  
Before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Legislative Hearing  
October 22, 2019

I'm proud to cosponsor the *Working to Integrate Networks Guaranteeing Member Access Now Act*, also known as the WINGMAN Act, to improve the service Congressional Offices are able to give to our veterans.

As a veteran and as the Representative of many veterans in Florida's 17<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, I know the importance intervention by a Congressional Office on behalf of veterans as they navigate the often confusing and subpar VA Healthcare system.

In my office alone, over 50 percent of the casework we process has to do with veterans' issues—nearly 170 cases just this year since I've been in office. I'm sure other members could share similar numbers and data as well. Our veterans need help and they are coming to us to get it.

When I talk with my district staff and I ask about these processes and how we can better serve constituents, I always hear about the run around with getting records and data from the VA—that's why this bill is so important. My office needs to be able to access the information necessary to ensure our veterans are getting the care they deserve. And not just my office—the office of every member of Congress.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

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I'm proud to cosponsor the *Fallen Warrior Battlefield Cross Memorial Act* to ensure that our fallen heroes can be honored with Fallen Soldier Displays at our national cemeteries.

Many of you may have seen a Fallen Soldier Display, I know those members on the Committee who, like me, served overseas, have seen them—a soldier's rifle stuck into the ground or into the soldier's boots, with a helmet on top, and dog tags hanging down—a universal symbol of a fallen soldier. An instant memorial to the life lost in service to our great nation.

These memorials mean more than a headstone or a cross, they are a visualization of a heroes' sacrifice and a recognition of their service. You will see them scattered across national cemeteries, often put there by fellow servicemembers to honor their fallen comrades. Unfortunately, you might have also seen them be taken down and removed from these sacred resting places.

Apparently, some find these memorials offensive because they feature a firearm and have issued complaints—therefore the Department of Veterans Affairs removes them. I for one, find this offensive. We must stand up for the fallen and ensure they can be properly memorialized through the use of Fallen Soldier Displays.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.