



SERVING THOSE WHO SERVED

ADVISORY BOARD

June 14, 2023

Altie Holcomb
Christina Zepeda
Chuck Varela
Ignacio Romero
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Chairman Van Orden, Ranking Member Levin, I submit this statement for the record to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity's Legislative Hearing on behalf of U.S.VETS - Inland Empire which our organization has provided Grant and Per Diem services. We currently run Emergency, Transitional and Permanent Housing along with rap around services to veterans in San Bernardino and Riverside County since 2003. Our organization currently is providing over 11,40 residential and service sites 142 programs across the nation 13 housing development in progress and collectively 29 years of service 000 veterans services nationwide.

Nationwide through our housing programs we have 340,872 beds filled, 6500 have retained and moved into permanent housing and 416,495 meals were served as a supplemental service. Under our Mental Health initiative 56,000 mental heals assessments have been performed to support veterans in their journey of wholeness. Under our Workforce initiative we have served 2,200 veterans and placed in jobs 1,418. We have 250 employer partners and 140 veterans trained as peer specialists to support our therapeutic communities where veterans are sources to veterans.

Nicole Starks-Murray
Executive Director

We thank you for the bipartisan work your Committee partook in to enhance the per diem rate during the public health emergency. During the health emergency, our nightly per diem rate increased to \$164.67 per night from our pre-pandemic rate of \$54.89. This allowed us to keep our doors open, provide needed emergency housing and supplemental housing such as hotel stays to ensure veterans were safe. We were able to purchase cleaning and sanitation supplies and contract a nurse to administer COVID testing, follow up and do prevention health screenings. This was made available to veterans staying in our program. The recent decrease at the end of the PHE dropped our rate to \$64.52. This has required us to adjust needed resources to veterans, decrease the number of veterans to be served and reroute staffing.

www.usvets.org/inland-empire

We appreciate the intent of H.R. 3848, to restore section 4201 assistance, which has been critical, and to increase the per diem rate to \$133%. However, having this ceiling on funding would still require us to decrease services, meals, go broke, look for pennies along the side of the road in hopes to provide needed services to veterans.

We support access to reimbursement in H.R. 491 to allow us to restore levels of services and supports the veterans we serve have earned, and the level of services that are required to successfully operate this grant.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at (951) 999-9120.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nicole Starks-Murray", is written over a white background. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Nicole Starks-Murray

Executive Director

U.S.VETS – Inland Empire



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