

JERRY MORAN

Joint Hearing: Legislative Presentation of Multiple Veteran Service Organizations

(WWP, BCA, NASDVA, JWV, VVA, MOPH, AMVETS)

Opening Remarks of U.S. Senator Jerry Moran (R-Kan.)

Wednesday, February 26, 2020 | 2:00 p.m.

As Prepared for Delivery:

To the seven organizations here to testify before us today – welcome. I would also like to extend a special welcome to those who traveled here from Kansas today. The work each of your organizations do is critical to supporting our nation’s veterans.

You each advocate for a concerted effort between your organizations, the VA, Congress and other stakeholders to effectively address veterans’ mental health needs and help prevent veteran suicide.

This committee hears you loud and clear. We will continue to work with VA and stakeholders to improve veterans’ mental health and suicide prevention services.

Ensuring the MISSION Act is providing quality, timely access to healthcare for veterans is a collective goal of SVAC, and I want to continue to work with all of my colleagues on this committee and the House to focus on this issue as VA works toward full implementation of the MISSION Act.

Even before I became Chairman of SVAC, I led legislative efforts focused on toxic exposure, specifically, epidemiological research on descendants of individuals with toxic exposure.

With every conflict, we have unfortunately seen that exposure to toxic substances are a part of warfare. But we still struggle to fully identify the risks from toxic exposure, and our VA system is too often stuck playing catch up long after the veteran has left the battlefield.

With the Vietnam War and the lingering effects of Agent Orange, we now know that toxic exposure can leave battle wounds that effect service members decades later and can impact their families as well.

Three organizations (WWP, VVA, AMVETS) from the TEAM Coalition addressing toxic exposure issues are here before the VA committees today. I would like to thank you all for the coalition’s effort to increase access to quality care for those impacted by toxic exposure during military service.

I know toxic exposure, such as burn pits, are a priority for my colleagues as well, and I look forward to working with them, and you, to promote policies that address these wounds that affect service members and their families.

We look forward to each of your presentations today and working together to continue improving the benefits and services provided to our nation’s veterans.

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