

**Chairman Jerry Moran Opening Statement  
Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction,  
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies**

**Markup of the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies  
Appropriations Act, 2018**

**July 12, 2017**

*(As prepared for delivery)*

This subcommittee will come to order. Good afternoon. Thank you all for being here today to discuss our FY2018 and the FY2019 budget recommendation for Department of Veterans Affairs.

As in years past, this subcommittee is the first to markup a bill. I am proud to get the 2018 appropriations process kicked off with this bill – crafted in such a truly open, bipartisan and collegial way.

We received a healthy top-line allocation that took into consideration the needs of our veterans and their families and our servicemembers, and within that framework we have created a thoughtful, serious path forward for both departments and our related agencies.

This bill provides \$88.9 billion in discretionary spending which is \$6.0 billion dollars which over last year's level. Within that, the Department of Veterans Affairs is provided a new record level of resources at \$78.4 billion in discretionary funding, which is \$4.0 billion over last year's level.

This bill adds generously to specific accounts within VA medical care to prevent veteran suicide, increase rural access to healthcare, support critical mental health programs, and provide robust funding for innovative medical research. There is also additional funding to eliminate the claims backlog, provide for the state home program, and support the Board of Veterans Appeals to address the growing appellate backlog.

The bill provides \$9.5 billion to support military construction and family housing needs, a \$1.8 billion increase over last year's level. This will fund a total of 214 military construction projects and eight family housing projects. This bill will give the Department of Defense the resources it needs to project power globally, enhance our warfighting capabilities and train our servicemembers. It is often overlooked, but this bill provides resources to improve the quality of life for servicemembers and their families. It provides \$1.4 billion to improve and manage military family housing, \$249 million to improve schools and \$556 million to improve the quality of military health care.

I want to thank Chairman Cochran and Vice Chairman Leahy for their support and the very solid allocation that allows us to accomplish these important goals.

I now ask my Ranking Member to make the usual motions.

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