



PRESS RELEASE

Vietnam Veterans of America

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VVA National President Jack McManus Calls for Accountability and Quality Representation in Veteran Benefit Claims Process

(Washington, D.C.) – “Vietnam Veterans of America remains deeply invested in ensuring quality representation in the veterans benefit claims process,” said Jack McManus, VVA national President, in testimony submitted April 27 to the House Veterans Affairs subcommittees on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs/Oversight and Investigations. “We believe more, rather than less, accountability ought to be required of all individuals and companies who assume the role of qualified advisor to veterans in the benefit claims process.”

“To that end,” said McManus, “VVA supports two propositions: First, that Congress pass legislation empowering VA’s Office of General Counsel to aggressively investigate any persons or entities charging a fee for work or services in connection with a benefit administered by VA, without being accredited to do so by OGC, and to sanction non-compliance with fines or referral to the Department of Justice; and Second, that no additions be made to the current categories of representatives before VA: Veteran Service Organization (VSO); Attorney; and Agent.”

“Our clients and other stakeholders in the veterans community have shared compelling evidence of questionable practices—inflated fee structures; data-mining of private information, possibly for nefarious purposes; and dubious qualifications on the part of myriad so-called ‘claim preparation’ companies who are currently marketing their services to veterans,” said McManus.

“We hold that ‘quality representation’ signifies being thoroughly trained in VA law and procedures; being duly accredited by VA; pursuing with zeal meritorious claims and appeals; and providing real value, while protecting fully the privacy of a veteran’s medical information,” said McManus. “Allowing claims-preparation companies to be accredited would only serve to shield their predatory conduct and perpetuate their theft of taxpayer funds and the veteran’s hard-earned compensation benefits.”

Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) is the nation's only congressionally chartered veterans service organization dedicated to the needs of Vietnam-era veterans and their families. VVA's founding principle is “Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another