



Testimony of the

NATIONAL COALITION
for **HOMELESS VETERANS**

United States House of Representatives
Committee on Veterans' Affairs,
Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

"Legislative Hearing"

March 16, 2022

Chairman Levin, Ranking Member Bost, and distinguished Members of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity:

NCHV thanks you for the opportunity to offer views on the following pieces of legislation on today's agenda.

1. Homeless Funds - Rep. Cherfilus-McCormick

The proposed language codifies the Section 4201 authorities from Public Law 116-315, Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020.

NCHV Supports. We know per reports from the field that this flexibility on behalf of safety, communications and transportation have had an overall beneficial impact and the Department of Veterans Affairs has also requested these be maintained.

NCHV also sees areas where this measure could be improved. Inclusion of items such as laptops in the communications section as well as gift cards specific to food restaurants and groceries.

2. HUDVASH Eligibility - Rep. Tom O'Halleran

This proposal opens HUD-VASH to individuals who may not fall under the priority population of veterans experiencing "chronically homeless." The bill extends current waiver flexibilities more permanently.

NCHV supports the overall intent of the language due to concerns about HUD-VASH utilization and the necessity of expanding access to this program to a broader group of housing unstable veterans. However, many NCHV Members who operate permanent supportive housing have long raised concerns about inadequate case management of veterans onsite. Further, our Members have raised the lack of a standard graduation protocol creating challenges both for veterans onsite and for landlords dealing with veterans decompensating, affecting other veterans onsite, and damaging their housing units.

As such, NCHV is unable to support this bill as currently drafted. We look forward to working with the Committee on the inclusion of language that would create standard processes for VA to determine whether a veteran needs case management, when to graduate a veteran from case management, and a process by which its application is standardized nationwide. In addition, we request the inclusion of language that requires the prioritization of veterans experiencing chronic homelessness for this intervention, to ensure that those who need it the most have access to vouchers before others who are more likely to self-resolve their housing issues.

3. Veteran Health Transition Training Act – Rep. Brownley

NCHV supports this legislation and requests the addition of Housing.

Additional Legislation NCHV Supports

S. 2172 - NCHV supports this critical legislation that makes necessary program adjustments to better accommodate homeless veterans with difficulties accessing services, as requested by VA, service providers and veterans. It would expand public transportation for veterans to access care, provide stable housing, and deliver appropriate medical care for aging veterans while they await long-term care placement. Emphasizing continuous improvement, the bill includes an assessment of remaining barriers to securing permanent housing and longer-term program reporting to refine veteran housing outcomes. NCHV urges the House to continue drafting similar legislation as has passed the Senate

H.R. 5025 – NCHV supports this bill which would increase and extend the authorization of appropriations for homeless veterans' reintegration programs

H.R. 5301 – NCHV supports the provision of technical assistance to recipients of grants for supportive services for very low-income families in permanent housing and comprehensive service programs, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5470 – NCHV supports the *HOMES for our Veterans Act of 2021*. The bill would improve grants awarded by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for comprehensive service programs to serve homeless veterans. It would remove barriers to continuing to provide veterans services, for service providers that have successfully serviced the veteran population originally requested in their contracts and whose community needs have changed.

H.R. 5606 – NCHV supports the *Return Home to Housing Act*. This bill is the stand-alone adjustment to the rate of per diem payments provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to grantees that provide services to homeless veterans.

H.R. 5783 - NCHV supports extending access to the HVRP program. NCHV recognizes this will increase the cost of the program but these should be weighed against the cost benefits incurred by programs pairing HVRP employment services with their housing programs.

H. R. 5624 – NCHV Supports the *Ending Veteran Homelessness Act of 2021*. The bill requires VA to produce a report with further data on shallow subsidy program under the Supportive Services for Veteran Families program.