

Senator Brown's Opening Statement for the Veterans Conference Committee  
Tuesday, June 24

Thank you Chairman Sanders and Chairman Miller.

We have problems at the VA.

We have veterans waiting too long for care. We need to fix that.

We also have a VA that has a culture at many of its facilities to hide those problems rather than to seek help.

That is why we are here today.

As for a so called "Choice Card", we've seen this before.

In September of 1993 President Bill Clinton addressed a joint session of Congress – I know several of you were there that day. For those who weren't or don't remember let me remind you.

The President talked about reshaping the nation's health care. While **holding up a card that I imagine looks a lot like those that want a "Choice Card"** he said "Every American would receive a health care security card that will guarantee a comprehensive package of benefits over the course of an entire lifetime."

**Instead of privatization schemes, we should simply make the VA better.**

VA provides care and services unmatched in the private sector. There are questions of diverting money from care to profits. And there are significant questions of medical privacy as veterans would be shuffling between VA and the private sector.

The care for our veterans is a **logical outcome of war**. We went to war without a pay for. Caring for our veterans of those wars shouldn't face a different standard.

There is also an unfair attack on the **vast majority of VA employees who are dedicated public servants to our nation and its veterans**.

These employees chose a career serving veterans. Many are veterans themselves.

These employees are not only on the front line of care, they are the ones reducing the backlog, helping to eliminate homelessness, and creating new ways to serve our veterans more effectively and efficiently.

Whether it is a police officer at the **Dayton VA** or a claims processor at the **Cleveland VARO** or a nurse at the **Toledo CBOC**, I want to remind them and everyone here today that our veterans rely on you and that each of us is obligated to do what we can to make your career at the VA better.

And, we will not castigate those who are innocent; nor condemn VA employees at large for the wrongs of a few.

We are short on time, so I will conclude my remarks and look forward to working with the Conference Committee on real solutions to make sure VA is meeting our obligation to our nation's veterans.

Thank you.

###