

STATEMENT OF  
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DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA  
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES  
BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
UNITED STATES SENATE  
WITH RESPECT TO  
**S. 2013**

WASHINGTON, D.C.

October 6, 2015

I would like to start off this afternoon by thanking Committee Chairman Johnny Isakson and Ranking Member Richard Blumenthal for allowing me the opportunity to testify on S. 2013.

I would also like to take this time to thank Senator Diane Feinstein and Senator Barbara Boxer for sponsoring this bill.

I am here today along with Nick Guest our National Chaplain and the Veterans of Foreign Wars California State Adjutant/Quartermaster. We are here representing the over 88,000 VFW members from the state of California who are in complete support of S. 2013, which lays the ground work to return the West LA campus to where it belongs – veterans.

While this bill specifically addresses the property located in Los Angeles, the larger issue of VA doing the right thing is important to all veterans.

I am also the Student Veterans of America Chairman for the VFW in California and as I travel to the different college campuses I hear the same question from our young veterans as I have for years from our older veterans - What is VA doing to help those who really need help like our homeless or our veterans with PTSD?

California has one of the largest homeless veterans' populations in the country. A lot of these veterans are also female veterans. Some have problems with drug and alcohol addiction, while others are contemplating suicide.

If housing could be approved under the Master Plan or be able to increase housing for these veterans and their families, we may be able to bring some of our veterans back into becoming productive citizens of our great country. They served for us, now let's help serve them.

We now have a new VA Director in Southern California and now is the perfect time to put this property back on track. I am not here to throw anyone under the bus for things that have happened in the past. We cannot change those things and it is a waste of your time to sit and listen to old stories.

The West LA campus was deeded through a will to the federal government with the explicit intent for the property to be used to assist veterans. Over time, VA lost sight of that intent and leased out parts of this property (which is over 300 acres) to private entities and has made little to no repairs or improvements for the veterans it was intended for. This bill returns this property to its veterans and Congress should work quickly to pass it into law.

Along with us, the VFW, we are currently working with the American Legion, Purple Heart Association, DAV and many other veteran service organizations to make sure things are done correctly as we move forward.

Again, thank you for allowing me to testify for all the veterans in California and around the world. Stand with us today and help us move this important bill forward.