

Gil Hough, Member, Veterans Advisory Council

U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs

?The State of VA Care in Hawaii?

January 11, 2006

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I have the distinct honor of residing in Hawaii since February 3, 1978. I arrived here on that date to serve on the staff of the Commander in Chief, United States Pacific Fleet. I retired from the United States Navy on July 1, 1989 and made Hawaii our family home.

The services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs in Hawaii are outstanding. I personally have received benefits/services from them to include: home loan guaranty; education benefits; disability payments; preference in Federal hiring; hospitalization, dental treatment; pharmacy services and general health care. My shipmates and I are very proud of them and lucky to have the great services that the VA provides us. However, this is mainly because we live on Oahu!

The consolidation of VA services with the United States Army in Hawaii (Tripler) was an absolute stroke of genius and provides a catalyst for future consolidation of services which will serve to maximize and leverage Government funding and services.

I retired as the Director, Veterans' Employment and Training Service, United States Department of Labor on March 31, 2004. I had the opportunity to provide services to veterans in the State of Hawaii, Guam, and Asia. During my tenure the only negative areas that were personally encountered are services to our Neighbor Island veterans by all Agencies because services and facilities are limited.

It would be my fondest wish that you and your colleagues do everything in your power to ensure the necessary stream of funding to ensure services to veterans on our Neighbor Islands are increased, services improved, and new facilities created.

I know my fellow veterans on our Neighbor Islands will provide you with their issues regarding services to them.

I wish to thank you for your outstanding contribution(s) to our great State and Nation. Please continue to do everything possible to ensure that our veterans' continue to receive that which they so richly deserve.