

Christine O. Hill, Nominee for Assistant Secretary, Congressional and Legislative Affairs,
Department of Veterans' Affairs

Prepared Statement of Christine O. Hill
Nominee for Assistant Secretary, Congressional and Legislative Affairs
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Mr. Chairman, Senator Burr, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am honored and humbled to be nominated by President Bush to serve as an Assistant Secretary at the Department of Veterans Affairs. Senator Dole, thank you for taking the time to be here today. It is quite a privilege to have someone whom I consider the ultimate role model for any woman nominated to serve in the Executive branch, speak on my behalf. My time on your staff was educational, inspirational, and my first opportunity to see just how rewarding it is to work on issues that are important to our Nation's veterans.

I am also most grateful to Secretary Jim Peake and Deputy Secretary Gordon Mansfield for their confidence in me. I have been given many wonderful opportunities over my career - most of which came about because of leaders who saw my potential and pushed me to further excellence. Both Secretary Peake and Deputy Secretary Mansfield challenge the professionals in the Department of Veterans Affairs, daily, towards greater excellence and I am fortunate to have learned from their strong guidance.

With me today is my husband, Greg, a veteran, an Air Force Pilot, and my constant, loving support over the past 28 years. When discussing the importance of a veteran's family, I know only too well what is asked of a military spouse...we have both spent sleepless nights wondering if the other would come home safely, we have both missed numerous important milestones and holidays, and we have both served as surrogate family when a fellow airman needed support or a helping hand. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee to ensure that veterans, and the families of veterans, recognize the VA as that helping hand as well.

I am proud that I am the daughter and granddaughter of veterans. My father was instrumental in sending me on the journey of a military career. My father-in-law, was a Korean War Air Force veteran. These men served their country selflessly, with no expectation of anything in return...but I, just like you, want to make sure that the best VA possible is there for them when needed.

As a veteran of 20 years of active service in the Air Force, I have a deep respect and appreciation for the personnel who serve in our Armed Forces. Time and again I saw, in my friends and colleagues, the honor, courage and commitment that make our military the greatest in the world. I see that in the veterans of wars before my time and I see that in our newest veterans from today's War on Terror.

I am inspired by them to help set the footprint that will address the challenges of the future...the continuation of world class health care; the smoothing of transition from active military service

to the status of veteran; and the efficient delivery of earned and deserved benefits. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing my work with the dedicated professionals at the Department of Veterans Affairs who clearly appreciate their mission and understand the many issues that are of concern to our veterans. I am committed to clear and open communication with this Committee and all members of Congress and their staffs. The work this Committee does is crucial to the success of the VA and only with the submission of quality, timely, and accurate information can we work effectively as a team.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, for your consideration of my nomination. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.