

STATEMENT OF H. GENE OVERSTREET, SERGEANT MAJOR,
2 USMC, RET., PRESIDENT, NON COMMISSIONED OFFICERS
3 ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

4 Sergeant Overstreet. Thank you for much, sir.

5 Chairman Sanders, and Chairman Miller, and Ranking Members
6 and also a greeting to all the members of the Senate and
7 House on Veterans' Committee Affairs.

8 The Non-Commissioned Officers Association is pleased to
9 have the opportunity to present the associations legislative
10 priorities for 2014. We are also pleased to recognize all
11 the veterans and the active duty assembled in this room
12 today. Thank you for your service.

13 Each year we bring a menu of agendas to this Committee.
14 As a matter of fact, I never can get through hardly any of
15 them as slow and as bad as I talk. So, today I am going to
16 take a little bit different tack, if I may, rather than
17 going to those agendas because it is clear to me that every
18 association here and for as long as I have been coming, if
19 you marry our statements, we all have the same agendas. We
20 prioritize them a little bit differently but basically the
21 agendas are the same.

22 So, I am going to suggest that all those things that we
23 look at such as funding, full funding for the VA, a system
24 that encompasses everyone, accessibility for veterans as far
25 as getting into the medical, expanding the existing VA

1 legislation entitlement, suicide, claim delays, backlogs,
2 cost of living, on and on and on. I am not going to talk

3 about each and every one of those.

4 I would like to talk about what is over the hill,
5 because I can tell you the things that happened on the other
6 side of the river, it seems like it is only a matter of fact
7 a short time before it gets over here before this Committee
8 and somebody has to do something about it.

9 So, I would like to talk about looking down the road
10 here. Now that, you know, today that we heard scuttlebutt
11 that the PX and the commissary is going away, medical is
12 going to be reduced because we cannot afford it anymore. It
13 costs too much.

14 Even now there is a Committee going around that on the
15 military retirement and it appears that or at least they are
16 kind of advocating that the military system is a broke, the
17 way we pay people.

18 They are even coming up with saying, okay, maybe we
19 should let people go at six years and buy them out at six
20 years. We should buy them out at 12 years, we should out
21 them out, pay them out at 20 years.

22 You know, I sat on the quadrennial review for a couple
23 of years on two different occasions; and even though that we
24 have some malfunctions on those, we made some
25 recommendations that we thought would smooth that out very

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1 smooth.

2 I have to say this. If the system is broke so bad, why
3 do we have the pipeline full of kids joining in the military
4 today? As a matter of fact, being me and my own service
5 being a Marine, if you want to join the Marine Corps today,

6 it would be six to nine months before you could go down
7 range, before you could go to boot camp, simply because the
8 pipeline is that full. And it is the same with all the
9 services. So, obviously the system is not too bad.

10 So, basically what I am saying, I think is important
11 that you use your influence to kind of shape in the system.
12 As we move forward with this, I think you could have a lot
13 to do with where we are going with this and perhaps keeping
14 a lot of that from coming over here.

15 It is just like the assumption committee. You know,
16 those committees that we have and that we put out there. I
17 thought the assumption committee did a pretty good job.
18 They have had some great recommendations and that is on how
19 to regiment the system for dealing with Agent Orange and
20 some things like that.

21 But as soon as the committee was over, it came to you
22 to implement and it actually goes to the VA to implement and
23 you for over watch. I think that is just the way that we
24 are looking at some of the things that we are looking down
25 the pipeline at today.

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1 Speaking of assumptions, I would say one last thing
2 that deals with assumptions. I think that every young man
3 and woman that comes into the military today that raises
4 their hand for so many years of honest and faithful service
5 has an assumption, and I think that assumption is that we
6 are going to give them the best training and the best
7 equipment that money can buy bar none.

8 I think that is the assumption that they have, and I

9 suggest to you that if we were going to recruit them, if we are
10 going to train them and if we are going to deploy them to a
11 combat theater, I think we owe them no less than that. We
12 do owe them the best training, the best equipment that money
13 can buy.

14 [Applause.]

15 Sergeant Overstreet. Thank you.

16 If one should get hurt, we ought to take care of them.
17 If one should not come back, we ought to take care of their
18 families.

19 As the Chairman already most appropriately outlined,
20 this is just a cost of war. Most Americans do not realize
21 what the real cost of war really is.

22 So, in conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I look forward to the
23 opportunity of working with you and the Committees for this
24 coming year and look forward to any of your questions.

25 Thank you very much.

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1 [The prepared statement of Sergeant Overstreet
2 follows:]

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