

Senator Roland W. Burris

STATEMENT by Senator Roland W. Burris

Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
Hearing: "Review of Veterans' Disability  
Compensation: What Changes are Needed to Improve the Appeals Process?"

February 11, 2009

Thank you Chairman Akaka for holding this hearing on an issue that is of great importance to our Nation's veterans.

Today we gather to discuss improvements that can be made to mitigate the delay in processing appeals. Our veterans deserve no less than to have their appeals determined in a timely and accurate manner. As a new Member on this Committee, I am beginning to hear from veterans in Illinois about issues surrounding appeals processing at the Board and Court, and claims' adjudication at the Regional Office level. I hope that today I can learn as much as I can about these issues.

Specifically, witnesses have been asked for legislative or policy recommendations that may help expedite the timeliness of appeals without sacrificing accuracy. I am particularly pleased that veterans' advocates are present to share their perspective on the process and ideas for reform. Indeed I hope that this hearing will be a starting point for dialogue and action to address this problem.

I thank all of our witnesses for all that they do to help veterans. I look forward to today's testimony.