

Ranking Member Richard Burr

STATEMENT OF SENATOR RICHARD BURR

Hearing to Consider the Nomination of

Paul J. Hutter

Thank you Mr. Chairman. And thank you very much for holding this hearing to consider the nomination of Paul Hutter to be VA's General Counsel. You have taken a fair, straight-forward, bipartisan approach to holding hearings on the President's nominations. And, more importantly, you have shown your willingness to move the nominations forward and fill important senior positions in the Department of Veterans Affairs. So I thank you for that.

Next to the Secretary and perhaps the Deputy Secretary, there is no one else at the Department of Veterans Affairs whose job touches all aspects and operations of the VA like the General Counsel's.

I met with Mr. Hutter earlier this month. I found him to be an engaging and enthusiastic nominee for this important job and I take great pleasure in giving his nomination my endorsement. Mr. Hutter has not only built a career around serving veterans, he is a veteran himself having served in the United States Army Judge Advocate General Corps for 30 years, achieving the rank of Colonel. Two of his sons also serve, both of them as aviators in the Navy. I imagine that makes for some very interesting Army-Navy football games!

Paul also worked in private practice before being hired in 1992 as a Staff Attorney in one of VA's Regional Counsel Offices. There he developed his skills at representing the VA and advocating for the care of our nation's veterans.

He's also served as Acting Assistance Secretary for Policy, Planning and Preparedness; Assistant General Counsel for Management Operations; and, of course, now as Acting General Counsel. Clearly, he is well-qualified for this position.

In many ways, Mr. Chairman, Paul Hutter is not so much being nominated for a new job, as he is being promoted from within based on the merits of his performance at other levels in the

VA organization. You know, it's kind of nice to see a person come up through the ranks every once in awhile.

Paul, I look forward to hearing your testimony and I look forward to asking some questions of you as well. With that Mr. Chairman, let me again thank you for holding this hearing. I look forward to working with you to complete the confirmation process for Mr. Hutter and I hope that can be done in an expeditious manner.