

Ranking Member Richard Burr

Opening Statement of Senator Richard Burr

Mark-up of Pending Health Legislation

November 14, 2007

Good morning Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you for calling this mark-up to focus the Committee's attention on legislation to address the health care needs of our nation's veterans.

First, I would again like to compliment the Senator from Ohio for his legislation to address a problem with the current payment structure for emergency care provided outside of the VA health care system. I noted at our hearing in October that I thought his work was a fine example of the way in which good legislation is produced. And I am proud to support it today.

Second, Mr. Chairman, I especially appreciate your willingness to work with me to improve a couple of the bills we are considering today. As you know, our staffs have been in discussions about the Pain Care legislation, S. 2160. I look forward to working with you to ensure that before S. 2160 passes the Senate, it focuses the proper attention on the issue of pain management and the needs of our veterans who suffer from debilitating pain. I believe we can do so without getting too far down into the weeds of the everyday practice of medicine. By working together, I'm sure we can accomplish that goal.

In addition, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for working with me to make some changes to the mental health bill that is before us today. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this bill, and I think we have made a number of improvements with the version that is before us today.

Of course, I think we could make the bill even better by adopting the amendment that I have noticed. But, I will wait until later to talk about that.

Mr. Chairman, I want to again thank you for scheduling the mark up this morning. I look forward to working with you and our colleagues as we move these bills to the floor and eventually to final passage out of the Senate.