

Michael W. Hager Nominee for Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration  
Department of Veterans Affairs

Prepared Statement of Michael W. Hager  
Nominee for Assistant Secretary for  
Human Resources and Administration  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
before the  
Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
November 14, 2007

Mr. Chairman, Senator Burr, and members of the Committee,

I want to thank you for the privilege of being here today.

I am indeed honored and humbled to be nominated by President Bush to serve as  
Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration for Veterans Affairs.

I am also honored by Acting Secretary Gordon Mansfield and former  
Secretary Jim Nicholson for their support of my nomination. The Department  
of Veterans Affairs is the second largest and one of the most diverse of all  
Cabinet departments in the United States Government and touches the lives of  
millions of veterans, their families, and their dependents each year.

The Chief Human Capital Officer for the Department must provide the leadership,  
oversight and management of all human capital programs and provide high quality  
administrative services to the Office of the Secretary and VA's Central Office  
community. To be effective, the leader of Human Resources must be an active advisor  
to the Secretary and leadership team on all human capital asset management programs.

I began my preparation for this assignment some 35 years ago working for a Defense and

Aerospace Contractor, Rockwell International. I have been fortunate to have been assigned to increasingly responsible managerial assignments in challenging and complex environments. These experiences included being the head of Human Resources for fifteen years at Banc One Corporation where employment grew from 7,000 employees to about 60,000.

The position I now seek, Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration for the Department of Veterans Affairs, would be considered the pinnacle of my long career. My inspiration to step out of a successful career path in the private sector for the opportunity to serve our government came from heroes such as Pat Tillman.

My opportunity came twenty-seven months ago when I was named Associate Administrator for Capital Access for the Small Business Administration. As head of Capital Access I manage an investment and loan portfolio of approximately \$80 billion. I also Chair the implementation of a new Loan Management Accounting System.

My views for the leadership role for which I am being considered are straightforward and built on a foundation of: clear communication; transparency; full disclosure; "play by the rules" policy; proper controls; fairness; ethics; a performance culture; human capital/business integration; trust; and respect.

Human Resources must ensure line of sight between its Mission/Strategies and the Mission/Strategies of Veterans Affairs and the needs of American veterans and their families. The Department must focus energies on VA Mission/Strategies, create leadership accountability, honor commitments, build individual capabilities, recognize contributions, and address performance issues.

If confirmed, I commit to a close working relationship with the Secretary, the Deputy Secretary and the entire leadership of the Department. I am mindful that the time available for my tenure is limited and therefore will place emphasis on the value of each day... every day. Listening and learning skills will be critical to my success. I am privileged to introduce my wife, Donna.

I close by stating the core of my passion to fulfill the expectations as the VA's Chief Human Capital Officer is fueled by the promise of President Lincoln ~ "To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan." I will strive to serve and honor the men and women who are America's veterans.

Thank you Mr. Chairman and the Committee for your time today in your consideration of my nomination.

I would be pleased to respond to any questions.