

Senator John Boozman

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June 8, 2011

Madame Chair and Ranking Member, thank you for arranging this hearing so that we can examine ways in which to improve veterans' benefits and evaluate ways in which we can address some of the concerns that have been brought before the committee during the hearings we have had throughout the first half of the year.

As you all are aware, there are many bills on the agenda today, but I would just like to express my support for those of which I am a cosponsor, S. 894 and S. 491, and say that I look forward to working with my colleagues who have legislation before us today to address the needs of our nation's veterans and their families.

I would especially like to thank you for providing us with the opportunity to review and comment on legislation I have introduced, S. 957, the Veterans' Traumatic Brain Injury Rehabilitative Services' Improvements Act of 2011. I would also like to thank Senator Begich for all of his hard work in helping me with this legislation as the Lead Co-sponsor of the Bill

This common sense legislation seeks to ensure that our veterans who have sustained Traumatic Brain Injuries are guaranteed the highest quality of care and ensure the highest quality of life for them and their families – A goal that I think every American can support.

These devastating and complex injuries are increasingly prevalent on today's battlefield, and each one can be different from the next and require unique treatment to ensure that our veterans make as full a recovery possible

I am pleased about the steps that the VA and Congress has already taken in the past to meet the needs of our wounded warriors suffering from TBI, and I believe that my common sense legislation is just another step in the right direction.

Panel 1:

Thank you all for being here today and for everything you are doing to help our veterans. Dr. Jesse, I am pleased to see you here today, and I very much appreciate all of the hard work you have done as we have worked to improve veterans' health care.

I appreciate your comments regarding the Veterans' Traumatic Brain Injury Rehabilitative Services' Improvements Act of 2011 and hope that we can work together to make this legislation serve our veterans in the best way possible.

During your testimony, you mentioned concerns regarding definitions in Section 2 of S. 957 that you found could possibly be "unworkable" or possibly "exceed the VA's statutory mission." I would look forward to working with you and your staff in drafting possible improvements to the bill that can ensure that it does not create confusing or duplicative issues in the VA, or any other serious problems, but also ensure that we preserve the spirit of the legislation.

Panel 2:

I would just like to say thank you to all of you for being here today and for everything you are doing to serve our veterans and address the needs of them and their families.

I would also like to thank the VFW, the DAV, the Legion for their support of my legislation, S. 957.

I would also express my appreciation to the Wounded Warrior Project for their support of the Veterans' Traumatic Brain Injury Rehabilitative Services' Improvements Act of 2011, and for their continued work on this issue.