

Senator Larry Craig

Prepared Statement of Senator Larry Craig

Chairman Akaka, Ranking Member Burr, thank you for holding this hearing today. Unfortunately I will have to leave early today for a hearing with the Energy Committee. However, I wanted to make a few comments on on S.2004, legislation I am cosponsoring with Senator Murray to establish Epilepsy Centers of Excellence within the Veterans' Health Administration. It is clear that one cause of epilepsy is traumatic brain injury-injuries that are certainly combat related. Although the creation of a Center of Excellence for every ailment our soldiers face is probably not necessary, I think the direct link between TBI and epilepsy warrants the establishment of Centers of Excellence for this ailment.

I think we owe it to our veterans who have sustained combat-related TBI to create a center that can solely focus on the prevention and treatment of epilepsy for veterans. I am pleased that the Committee supported this legislation which will allow the VA to continue their wonderful R&D work on TBI, with the goal of finding preventative measures against TBI-related epilepsy in the near future.

Again, I look forward to voting in support of Mr. Hager's nomination very soon, and hope that he can be confirmed in short order by the full Senate. I also hope that the full Senate will move expeditiously on S.2004 in support of nation's veterans. Thank you again, Mr. Chairman.