



March 14, 2016

The Honorable Johnny Isakson
Chairman
The United States Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
Russell Senate Building, Room 412
Washington, D.C. 20510-6050

RE: VA Appeals Modernization/Reform Hearing – March 15, 2016

Dear Chairman Isakson:

On behalf of the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA), we respectfully submit and request the following text be included in the official record in support testimony to be delivered by VA Secretary Robert McDonald on March 15, 2016 (RE: Appeals):

The current appeals process is failing our Veterans with an inventory of almost 450,000 appeals and at current rates, with no change in process, it is projected the inventory could grow to over two (2) million appeals over the next decade. NASDVA strongly advocates reforming the VA administrative appeals process to streamline Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA) appeal procedures and decisions to allow for seamless transition to and enable decisions in the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA). By placing significant focus on the process within VBA (Regional Offices) prior to appeals being sent to BVA, due diligence and due process (in favor of the veteran) can be maintained while creating an environment where appeals requiring VBA or BVA adjudication can be decided on the merits of the original claim; in a timely manner. In addition, before transforming to a streamlined appeal process which is more efficient and less costly for taxpayers, VA will require (and NASDVA supports) a short-term funding increase to be able to resolve the inventory of appeals that are pending in the current system. As the “front line” providers of veterans’ claims service and representation, NASDVA is ideally positioned to work with VBA and BVA to assist in reforming and transforming the appeals process. NASDVA has been and continues to work with VA and Veterans Service Organizations to improve the appeals process for our veterans. We are committed to continuing our work on this important issue and helping effect meaningful and lasting change.

Thank you for the important work of The Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs and for the continued support of our Nation's Veterans. I am

Sincerely,

Randy Reeves
Senior Vice President

President
David Brasuell, Idaho

Senior Vice President
Randy Reeves, Mississippi

Junior Vice President
Verdie Bowen, Alaska

Executive Director
Les Beavers, Kentucky