

Jose D. Riojas, Designee for Assistant Secretary for Operations, Security, and Preparedness,
Department of Veterans Affairs

Opening Statement of Jose D. Riojas

Designee for Assistant Secretary for Operations, Security, and Preparedness, Department of
Veterans Affairs

Before the

Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs

United States Senate

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Chairman Akaka, Senator Burr, Distinguished Members of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs: I am a Veteran and I am honored to be before you today seeking your endorsement to become the Assistant Secretary for Operations, Security, and Preparedness for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

I consider it a privilege to have been nominated by President Obama to serve at VA and I appreciate the confidence that he and Secretary Shinseki have in me to help provide the best service possible to our Veterans and to help transform the VA into a 21st Century organization.

I fully support President Obama's vision for change and Secretary Shinseki's effort to transform the Department of Veterans Affairs into a 21st century organization. I also fully support Secretary Shinseki's operating principles that the Department of Veterans Affairs be; people-centric, results-driven and forward-looking. I believe my leadership experience in transforming organizations and using these principles in the past would serve me well should I be confirmed.

I appreciate the time and attention you and you staff members have shown me in the past several weeks. I have given and will continue to give your guidance very serious consideration. It is clear to me that we jointly share a passion for serving Veterans. If confirmed, I look forward to working continuously with you to constantly improve the care and attention that our Veteran's deserve.

My life has been shaped by those who have worn the military uniforms of our nation. Family members who are Veterans, including my father, instilled in me a sense of patriotism and love of country which caused me to want to serve and protect my country. I was fortunate to have worn the uniform of a Soldier for over thirty years. During that time I was awed by the sacrifice of countless men and women who performed remarkable feats during extraordinary conditions in peacetime and in combat.

Today my wife Susan, also a Veteran and I have a son, Joshua who is an Army Captain serving at Fort Bragg, N.C. On the 28th of this month our daughter Christina will be commissioned as an Army Captain and begin her service as an Army Surgeon at Fort Gordon, GA. So my past has been and my future is being influenced by those who have, are and will be serving our great nation. Veterans have served me well and quite frankly, made me successful and I would consider it an honor to play even a small role in serving them and would consider it a highlight of my professional life.

Should I be confirmed, I would like:

- Veterans, to know that I would be committed to continuously improving the operations, security and preparedness within the VA so that continuous support can be given regardless of the conditions: to include before, during and after any natural or man-made disaster. The Department of Veterans Affairs must be best prepared to perform during times of extreme circumstances.
- I would like all the professional members of the VA team to know that I would be committed to providing positive leadership to improve the efficiency and effectiveness within the Department so that support to Veterans can be maximized.
- I would like all the members of this Committee to know that I would be committed to working with you as a partner in serving Veterans.
- And I would like members of the interagency community to know that I would seek to establish open lines of communication and maximize collaboration and integration between our organizations.

Please know that if confirmed, I am prepared to serve as the Assistant Secretary of Operations, Security and Preparedness with the utmost of dedication, commitment and passion. If this Committee sees fit to recommend my confirmation, I look forward to serving Veterans in a very positive manner.

Chairman Akaka and distinguished members of this Committee thank you again for your consideration and I look forward to any questions that you may have for me.