

Statement of
Sloan D. Gibson
Nominee for Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Before the Committee on Veterans' Affairs
United States Senate
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Chairman Sanders, Ranking Member Burr, and Distinguished Members of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, thank you for this opportunity to seek your endorsement to become Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs. I have met with many of you individually and appreciate your strong support for Veterans and for the mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs. I've listened carefully to your concerns and advice and have benefited from your counsel.

I am honored by President Obama's nomination to serve as Deputy Secretary and I appreciate the confidence that both President Obama and Secretary Shinseki have shown in my ability to make a meaningful difference for Veterans and their families. I am fully committed to the priorities set forth by the President and the Secretary and, if confirmed, will do my utmost to ensure they are achieved.

I want to acknowledge the leadership of Secretary Shinseki, the hard work of many thousands of dedicated professionals at VA, and the unwavering support from the President and Congress, including this Committee. Remarkable progress has been made in improving Veteran access to VA services, transforming the benefit claims process, and reducing Veteran homelessness, among many other areas. As a Veteran and one who cares deeply about the welfare of Veterans and their families, I want to express my gratitude for the passion, commitment, and sustained support all of you continue to provide. If confirmed, I will be proud to work alongside the men and women at VA as well as the members of this Committee to deliver the very best support to America's Veterans and their families.

If confirmed as Deputy Secretary, I would expect to serve as chief operating officer, working under the Secretary's direction to manage day-to-day operations of the Department. My business experience in both for-profit and not-for-profit sectors provides a strong background for this role. The discipline and accountability of regularly meeting a bottom line and delivering results that meet the expectations of a range of stakeholders has built the skills and knowledge I would bring to discharging these responsibilities.

In addition, I bring a passion for serving America's Veterans and their families and because of my close association with today's troops and families through my work at the USO, I believe I have useful insights into meeting their needs. Through this work I have also built close working relationships with senior Department of Defense leaders and believe that experience could be helpful as

VA and DoD continue to collaborate to meet the needs of transitioning troops and families. I have also had the privilege of working with Members of Congress to support troops and military families. I understand the importance of these relationships and the need for regular dialogue. If confirmed, I look forward to participating in this process of engagement with this and other committees.

Having led a non-profit organization supporting the military, I bring an understanding of how Veterans Service Organizations and other non-governmental organizations can and do work collaboratively with government departments to accomplish more for those they serve. As I know has been a priority for Secretary Shinseki, if confirmed, I would support VA's continued collaboration with these important partners.

I'm especially proud of how the USO has supported the changing needs of today's troops and military families. Our efforts on behalf of wounded, ill and injured troops, their families and caregivers and families of the fallen have been especially meaningful. In particular, we came to understand that healing is about more than what happens in an operating room or a physical therapy facility and involves not just the wounded warrior but the entire family. USO's programs and facilities are designed to sustain hope and instill confidence in a happy and fulfilling future, keep families together and keep them strong, build a plan for the future either through continuing education or a new career, and provide a support network in the event progress falters. Much of this work is accomplished through collaborative relationships with best-in-class organizations allowing us to be both effective and efficient at meeting these objectives. We established clear goals and measurements to ensure we were meeting the needs of troops and families. Our focus on outcomes – not simply outputs – assured USO customers and donors that we were delivering on our promise.

Service organizations, such as the one I have led the past five years, must be both effective at delivering measurable outcomes for those it serves as well as efficient in the use of resources. Trust is earned when these two objectives are consistently achieved—the trust of the people served as well as the trust of those who invest resources in the enterprise. VA exists to serve Veterans. I believe, and it is clear to me that the Secretary and VA senior leaders believe, VA's success is defined by Veterans and measured in terms of individual Veteran outcomes. If confirmed, I will work with the thousands of dedicated professionals at VA to achieve continued success on these terms as well as to insure that VA continues to be a good steward of the precious resources entrusted to it. Our Veterans deserve it and you and the American people expect nothing less.

I thank this Committee for its long history of unwavering, bipartisan commitment to Veterans. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to fulfill that commitment.