

**Senator Jerry Moran –
Senate Veterans Affairs Committee Legislative Hearing
Statement on “Discussion Draft” Legislation (H.R. 476)
September 16, 2015**

As a Member of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to collect views from key stakeholders regarding numerous pieces of important legislation. However, some entities with varying views do not always have the opportunity to voice their opinion, specifically as it relates to a perspective that I share regarding draft legislation that would place caps on professional aviation training. This is a circumstance where close examination is necessary to make certain that subjective caps do not create unnecessary burdens and consequences on the institutions and veterans seeking this specialized training.

I understand there are extreme examples of abuse and cost overruns occurring in some professional aviation training programs for veterans. I agree that controlling cost and eliminating waste and abuse of veterans’ educational benefits is critical as stewards of taxpayer dollars and for the sustainment of the GI benefit program.

The overwhelming majority of student-veterans who enter these programs and the institutions that provide aviation training are honest actors who play by the rules. The examples of waste and abuse are deplorable but they do not represent all flight training programs and I fear that those who conduct honorable and superior programs are unnecessarily caught in the fray.

Should this bill be further considered, I will offer amendments to remove the offending provisions and should that effort fail I will vigorously oppose this legislation.

Before we negatively impact institutions with professional aviation programs that are properly serving veterans utilizing GI education benefits, the VA should take a closer look at enforcing and upholding its own policies. Part of the issue is mismanagement and poor decisions made from within the VA system.

I would urge my colleagues, the VA, and other interested parties to address the core problems in the way this program is managed and administered instead of addressing the symptoms. I look forward to discussing ways in which we can improve oversight on the implementation of GI educational benefits and avoid a circumstance that would diminish or eliminate professional aviation training programs across the country.