

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 9, 2014

Chairman Bernie Sanders
Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
Russell Senate Building Room 412
Washington, D.C. 20510-6050

Ranking Member Richard Burr
Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
Hart Senate Office Building Room 825A
Washington, D.C. 20510-6050

Dear Chairman Sanders and Ranking Member Burr:

I am writing to respectfully request that the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs hold a hearing and a mark-up on comprehensive, bipartisan legislation that I have introduced with five of my Senate colleagues to address the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability claims backlog.

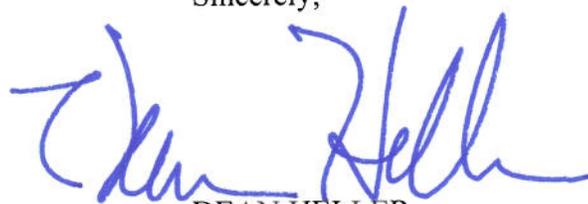
During the 113th Congress, a focus of this Committee has been holding the VA accountable to reducing the veterans' disability claims backlog by 2015. If the VA is to reach its goal, I believe Congress must act now and work together with this agency to give it the tools needed to fix this problem and create a 21st century benefits delivery system that works for our Veterans.

That is why I introduced the bipartisan 21st Century Veterans Benefits Delivery Act (S. 2091), which addresses three critical areas of the claims process: claims submission, VA Regional Office practices, and federal government responses. The targeted reforms included in this legislation will help the VA reach a 21st century claims process that is accurate and efficient. Given the urgency of reducing the 350,000 veterans' claims that are still backlogged today, I request quick consideration of this measure so that Congress can keep its promise to care for our Veterans.

I am pleased that two other members of this Committee, Senators Moran and Tester, have also joined me in supporting this legislation. This backlog has a real impact on our nation's men and women who volunteered to serve, and it is time that the Committee and Congress address this bipartisan issue through common sense reforms.

Thank you for your leadership on this Committee as we continue advocating for America's Veterans, and I look forward to working with you on this matter.

Sincerely,



DEAN HELLER
U.S. Senator