

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION

BANKING, HOUSING, AND
URBAN AFFAIRS

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

VETERANS' AFFAIRS

February 27, 2015

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

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

Dear Chairman Isakson and Ranking Member Blumenthal:

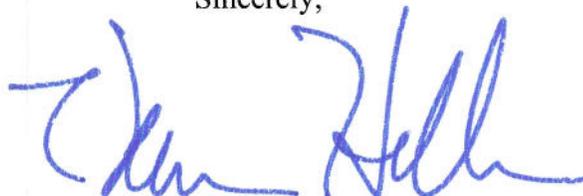
I am writing to respectfully request that the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs hold a hearing to assess the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) efforts to care for our nation's women veterans and returning female service members.

Today, nearly 2.3 million women are U.S. veterans, and with women currently serving as 15 percent of the U.S. military's active duty personnel and 18 percent of the Guard and Reserve Forces, this number will continue to rise. As the demographics of our nation's military changes, the VA has a responsibility to adapt its programs to meet the needs of female veterans. While the VA has acknowledged the importance of addressing this growing need, veterans, lawmakers, and Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) all agree there is significant work ahead to improve gender-specific care and services.

As members of the Senate committee with jurisdiction over the VA, we as legislators have a responsibility to keep the VA accountable and conduct oversight to ensure our nation's women veterans are cared for. That is why I request that, during the current work-period, a hearing be scheduled to assess the VA's current programs and services for female veterans and how best to address the many issues our women veterans are facing, including unemployment, homelessness, education, and access to proper health care and benefits from the VA. Our colleagues on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee have already taken initial steps to schedule a similar hearing, and I believe it is now time for the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to show leadership and unity on this critical issue.

As we continue advocating for America's veterans, I thank you for your leadership on this Committee. As always, I look forward to working with you on this matter and appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



DEAN HELLER
U.S. Senator