

Hill Watch: NCHV Testifies, Funding Process Delays

House Veterans Affairs Committee holds homelessness hearing

Congress Extends

Two subcommittees of the House Veterans Affairs Committee (the Health and the Economic Opportunity subcommittees) held a joint hearing on Jan. 18, 2018 on the topic of homeless veterans and the programs that serve them. Coming in the wake of news about a rise in homeless veterans counted in the Point in Time count, as well as the fiasco around HUD-VASH case management funding, the hearing was a timely opportunity to shine a light on what is happening in the federal government's response system.

Two panels of witnesses were called to testify, and NCHV was proud to be included on the first panel. We were joined on the first panel by local veteran service organizations, as well as Easter Seals and U.S. VETS. NCHV CEO Kathryn Monet provided our comments and her testimony struck a chord with several House members, from both sides of the aisle. The second panel consisted of representatives from VA, HUD, and DoL. To view a recording of the hearing in its entirety, as well as access copies of testimonies, go to <http://bit.ly/2EVt1Wi>. Or, visit the NCHV twitter page (www.twitter.com/NCHVorg) for a "cliff notes" version of the hearing provided in real time by NCHV's communications team.

An even shorter summation of the hearing was provided in Stars and Stripes, and though it is concise, it provides a good primer on the issues surrounding the hearing, and some takeaways from it. That article can be found at <http://bit.ly/2DPfQXK>.

Congress Extends Self-Imposed Deadline on Funding

Because of the fast paced nature of the changes we have been seeing to the congressional funding process, any updates NCHV supplies at this time are likely to have changed by the time this reaches your mailbox. However, we want to make sure everyone is on the same page as to what kind of funding numbers we need to see from Congress if we are to ensure progress continues to be made in the fight to end veteran homelessness. There is still time to make calls and write emails to your representatives in Congress, informing them of the need and your recommendations.

A series of continuing resolutions ("CR's") have funded the government past its funding deadline of last September. The most recent (at time of press) was the CR passed to end the three day government shutdown of Jan. 19-22nd, 2018. This bill extends funding at a flat rate until Feb. 8, 2018.

For a final funding bill numbers may change, either up or down from the flat rate. We already have a good picture of where the House and Senate will come down during negotiations on our core programs. Here are the proposed numbers in both houses of Congress, as compared to the numbers of the President's budget request of several months ago:

	FY 2017	President's Request	House Proposed	Senate Proposed
Grant and Per Diem	\$257 m	\$257 m	\$257 m	\$257 m
Supportive Services for Veteran Families	\$320 m	\$320 m	\$320 m	\$340 m
HUD-VA Supportive Housing	\$40 m (~5,500 vouchers)	\$0	\$0	\$40 m (~5,500 vouchers)
Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program	\$45 m	\$45 m	\$45 m	\$47.54 m

NCHV supports the Senate proposed numbers in every case. The need for more HUD-VASH vouchers is seen in many of the communities you work in, especially when it comes to the creation of new affordable housing through project basing of these vouchers. The SSVF program is in need of an infusion of funds to the tune of \$400 m this year in order to prevent the expiration of the 2015 surge grants, but the additional funds seen in the Senate numbers will go a long way towards preventing that expiration in many communities. Likewise, the Senate numbers for HVRP are not perfect – NCHV supports, at the minimum, funding that program at its fully authorized level of \$50 million.

We will continue to keep you updated as this process continues to drag on. Please keep your eyes on your email inboxes, as well as the NCHV website, for all the most up to date information.