

# HEARING ON PENDING NOMINATIONS

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## HEARING

BEFORE THE

### COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

### UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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NOVEMBER 6, 2013

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# C O N T E N T S

NOVEMBER 6, 2013

## SENATORS

	Page
Sanders, Hon. Bernard, Chairman, U.S. Senator from Vermont .....	1,2
Burr, Hon. Richard, Ranking Member, U.S. Senator from North Carolina .....	3
Boozman, Hon. John, U.S. Senator from Arkansas .....	4
Heller, Hon. Dean, U.S. Senator from Nevada .....	5
Blumenthal, Hon. Richard, U.S. Senator from Connecticut .....	45

## WITNESSES

Reed, Jon. Jack, U.S. Senator from Rhode Island .....	1
Gibson, Sloan D., MA, MPA, Nominee to be Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs .....	6
Prepared statement .....	8
Response to prehearing questions submitted by Hon. Bernard Sanders .....	9
Questionnaire for Presidential nominees .....	15
Letters from the Office of Government Ethics .....	38
Letter from the Designated Agency Ethics Official, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs .....	40
Letter from the nominee to the Office of General Counsel, U.S. Depart- ment of Veterans Affairs .....	41
Schwartz, Linda S., RN, MSN, DrPH, FAAN, Nominee to be Assistant Sec- retary for Policy and Planning, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs .....	47
Prepared statement .....	49
Response to posthearing questions submitted by Hon. Bernard Sanders ...	51
Questionnaire for Presidential nominees .....	55
Letters from the Office of Government Ethics .....	81
Letter from the Designated Agency Ethics Official, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs .....	83
Letter from the nominee to the Office of General Counsel, U.S. Depart- ment of Veterans Affairs .....	85
Tobias, Constance B., JD, Nominee to be Chairman, Board of Veterans' Ap- peals, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs .....	87
Prepared statement .....	89
Response to prehearing questions submitted by Hon. Bernard Sanders .....	91
Questionnaire for Presidential nominees .....	94
Letter from the Office of Government Ethics .....	104
Letter from the nominee to the Office of General Counsel, U.S. Depart- ment of Veterans Affairs .....	105

## APPENDIX

Reed, Richard, NSO, Veteran Service Director, Vermont Office of Veterans Affairs; letter .....	111
Gillis, Catherine L., Ph.D., RN, FAAN, Dean and Helene Fuld Health Trust Professor of Nursing, Vice Chancellor for Nursing Affairs, Duke University School of Nursing; letter .....	112
Tri-Council for Nursing; letter .....	114



## HEARING ON PENDING NOMINATIONS

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2013

U.S. SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:05 a.m., in room 418, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. Bernard Sanders, Chairman of the Committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Sanders, Blumenthal, Burr, Boozman and Heller.

### **OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BERNARD SANDERS, CHAIRMAN, U.S. SENATOR FROM VERMONT**

Chairman SANDERS. My apologies for being late. We want to thank Senator Reed and Mr. Gibson for being here.

Today we have an important hearing. We are going to be discussing some very important VA appointees and we are going to get to that in a second.

Let me begin by thanking Senator Reed for being here; I look forward to hearing what you have to say. Senator, it is all yours.

### **STATEMENT OF HON. JACK REED, U.S. SENATOR FROM RHODE ISLAND**

Senator REED. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Senator Burr, and all the Members of the Committee.

I have the great honor and privilege to introduce Sloan Gibson, President Obama's nominee to be Deputy Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

I have known Sloan for many years and know him to be someone who is deeply committed to our servicemembers and veterans, and to their families. Sloan is joined today by his wife Margaret and their daughter Celia; their daughter Laura could not be here today but she is certainly here in spirit.

Sloan has over 30 years of management and leadership experience in the private sector, but his career started with the ideals of duty, honor, country. Those ideals he upholds everyday.

They were instilled in him as a young cadet at West Point.

He graduated in the class of 1975. Was commissioned as an infantry officer, earned both his airborne and ranger qualifications, served as a training development officer at the Army Infantry School at Fort Benning, GA. Then after his distinguished military service, went on to earn a Master's Degree in economics from the University of Missouri and later a Master's Degree in public administration from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard.

Sloan has extensive experience in the banking sector where he managed large organizations, oversaw strategic development and was held accountable to investors every quarter.

He currently serves as the president and CEO of the USO, or United Service Organizations, an organization that we all know has for many decades lifted the spirits of our servicemembers in every corner of the globe.

With his personal commitment and dedicated leadership over the last 5 years, Sloan has transformed the USO, expanding its global and local presence, broadening its services and programming not just for deployed troops but also for wounded warriors and their families. He has built enduring partnerships with countless non-profit organizations, the Congress, the Department of Defense, and the White House.

His application of sound business practices has enabled the USO to measure the impact of its program by focusing on outcomes and effectiveness, not just on the number of activities and services provided.

All of these experiences will enable him to successfully assist Secretary Shinseki in leading the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. Chairman, you know that it is vitally important to have leaders at the VA who can effectively run such a large organization while understanding the needs of the veterans whom they serve.

In my view, Sloan has the right combination of skills and expertise to make him well qualified for his position. I know every decision he makes will be made in the context of the young men and women who wear the uniform of the United States or who have worn the uniform of the United States. It will be all about them because he is all about them.

With that, I would urge his consideration and nomination.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CONTINUING STATEMENT OF HON. BERNARD SANDERS,  
CHAIRMAN, U.S. SENATOR FROM VERMONT**

Chairman SANDERS. Well, Senator Reed, thank you very much for your work for our military and for VA. We appreciate it.

Let me make a short statement. Then I will give it over to Senator Burr and then we will get to Mr. Gibson.

In my view as I have stated many times, I think VA does a very good job in providing quality, cost-effective health care to our veterans. We also know that the VA has a number of problems that this Committee is going to continue working hard to try to improve.

Everybody is aware that as we move from a paper to paperless claims benefit system, it still takes too long. This Committee is going to be working with VA to expedite that process to make sure that every veteran gets the benefits he or she is entitled to in a reasonable period of time.

We also know it takes the Board too long to decide appeals. We know VA and DOD—and this Committee has discussed this endlessly and will continue to stay on this issue—have spent years on an integrated electronic health record with very little to show for it except maybe spending hundreds of millions of dollars and no one is quite sure where that money has gone.

We know that VA has difficulty managing major construction projects. They constantly end up with huge cost overruns. We want to know why that is.

We know far too many veterans do not know about the benefits and health care for which they are entitled. You and I chatted about that. I think VA is now doing a much better job in outreach but we still have to move on that issue and others.

So, the bottom line is you have a huge bureaucracy and a very large budget. I think the average veteran in this country believes VA is doing a good job, in terms of health care at least but we can do better.

As you know, if confirmed, you will be the second highest-ranking person at VA. That position has traditionally been VA's chief operating officer.

Mr. Gibson, the individual who fills this position must be able to oversee and ensure the optimal functions of and seamless collaboration among all of VA's offices, including its health care system, benefits program, and national cemeteries. That is no small job.

As you know, this individual has traditionally served as the Department's lead in collaborative efforts with DOD, an enormous issue, because many of us believe that we are dealing with one human being not two separate entities here. So, the job that you are applying for is of enormous consequence.

So, I am going to end there and turn the mic over to Senator Burr.

**STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD BURR, RANKING MEMBER,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM NORTH CAROLINA**

Senator BURR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I want to start by pointing out that I did ask for a delay in the hearing for one of the nominees and the reason is because we have not yet received documents that the Committee has been requesting since last year.

Now, let me make it perfectly clear. I will need to hold another hearing after I receive the information, if I receive the information, so that we have an opportunity to ask informed questions which I cannot do today.

Although I am not sure what the impact will be on the current slate of nominees, I hope in the future we will proceed more deliberately when considering nominations.

Now, turning to why we are here today: Sloan Gibson is a great nominee. As a board member of West Point, he starts off with good credentials. He served a distinguished banking career in North Carolina—I am not sure why he ever left and went to Georgia and Alabama but it was our loss.

I also want to point out some of the challenges that would be faced by anyone assuming a leadership role at the VA. Hundreds of thousands of veterans and their families are waiting in a backlog of disability claims, and the time it takes to resolve an appeal is a major concern.

VA continues to struggle with the future of the integrated electronic health records and modernization of VistA. Several recent quality management issues at VA medical facilities including misuse of insulin pens, an outbreak of Legionella, and delays in pa-

tient care have unfortunately resulted in patient harm and patient death.

VA's construction program, as the Chairman pointed, has been plagued with problems including delays in building medical centers, mismanagement of leases for health care centers, and an unclear path forward on how to deal with VA's list of \$60 billion in construction projects.

Considering the impact that all of these issues and other problems at VA can have on veterans, their families, and their survivors, it must be a priority for VA's entire leadership team to get it under control.

I also want to mention that as part of an oversight role, the Committee often asks for information from VA about its operations; but in recent years we have run into long delays trying to get responses.

In fact, this year VA has not responded to dozens of questions about its budget requests, inquiries about bills we considered back in June, and a request more than 6 months ago for the results of a survey of VA mental health providers.

All of these issues are absolutely crucial, and the Committee's role and function is stymied when the agency will not provide those documents requested.

So, I want to make it clear to the nominees today, if you are confirmed, you will be expected to provide the Committee with timely responses to our requests. This information is critical in helping us understand what is working well, what is not, and what changes may be needed to help improve the lives of veterans across the Nation.

Mr. Chairman, I pledge with you to work with Mr. Gibson once he is nominated to not only solve the challenges of our requests but to solve the challenges and problems at the VA.

I thank the Chair.

Chairman SANDERS. Thank you, Senator Burr.

Senator BOOZMAN.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN BOOZMAN,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM ARKANSAS**

Senator BOOZMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and again it is good to have you here, Mr. Gibson. I apologize that we had a meeting scheduled and it did not work out. Hopefully, we will get that done within the near future. But we do appreciate your willingness to step in and be helpful.

You have an excellent reputation and I know that I can speak for the entire Committee in a very bipartisan way—which this Committee is very much that way—that we will help you any way we can. On the other hand, in a very bipartisan way we are going to hold you accountable.

As has been mentioned already, there are lots of challenges; and this is just so, so very important. So again, I think our commitment is about working together, all of us, you know. We actually can get some of these things solved and it is time to get some of these things solved.

So again, we appreciate your willingness to serve and look forward to working with you in the future. Thank you.



Chairman SANDERS. Thank you, Senator Boozman.  
Senator Heller.

**STATEMENT OF HON. DEAN HELLER,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEVADA**

Senator HELLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Senator Burr, for holding this hearing today.

I want to begin by welcoming our nominees, Mr. Gibson, Ms. Tobias, and Dr. Schwartz as they prepare to testify and answer questions that this Committee may have.

It is a great honor to serve veterans. I look forward to hearing from each of them about what they would do and what they would bring to the VA, if confirmed, to make it work as effectively as possible for our veterans.

As we approach Veterans Day, we must remember the promise we made to our veterans: to care for them and their families, both during their service and, of course, after they return from war.

George Washington once said, "The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional as to how they perceive veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their Nation."

So, it is no secret to anyone here that the way we as a nation honor and appreciate our veterans for their sacrifice is through ensuring that they are cared for by providing compensation for their wounds incurred during service both visible and invisible.

It is my feeling that as long as we have veterans waiting more than 125 days on a claim for disability compensation, we have not fulfilled America's promise to our veterans.

Nationwide over 400,000 veterans are stuck in the backlog. Nevada's VA regional office has 6,700 pending claims, more than 4,200 of those which have waited longer than 125 days, which is VA's deadline for making a decision on a claim.

So, even more for me as the Senator from Nevada, I note the VA offices in Reno, Las Vegas, and across the State have our veterans waiting 458 days on average to receive a decision on their claims. This is the longest waiting time in the Nation. For me and I think for all of us here, it is simply unacceptable.

I bring this up because should you be confirmed, each nominee before the Committee today will have an opportunity to positively contribute to the reduction of backlog claims in VA.

I realize there is no easy, permanent fix for the claims backlog, not obviously a single fix, but eliminating the backlog will require effective management from VA's leadership, a coordinated effort throughout the VA, and the assistance of legislators, veterans, and veterans service organizations.

So, it is my hope that each of these nominees, as well as my colleagues on the Committee will bear this in mind when considering the responsibilities associated with each of these positions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman SANDERS. Thank you, Senator Heller.

Mr. GIBSON. I know that you have your family with you. If you would be so kind as to introduce them, we would appreciate that.

Mr. GIBSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am joined by my wife of 31 years Margaret, our older daughter Celia and her fiancé, Michael Moran.

I also have several friends here from the USO, Jennifer Giglio and John Hanson, in particular. John is a former Assistant Secretary at VA and both of them have really been essential to helping me prepare for this hearing.

I think everyone would realize that I would not be able to take on the prospect of this kind of an assignment and responsibility without the support of a loving family, and I am very grateful for that support.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman SANDERS. Well, we thank your family and friends for being with us on this important day.

Mr. Gibson, under the rules of the Committee, the testimony of all Presidential nominees appearing before the Committee must be taken under oath. I would ask that you stand and raise your right hand.

Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give before the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God.

Mr. GIBSON. I do swear.

Chairman SANDERS. Thank you. Please be seated.

I suspect that Members will be in and out. It is a particularly busy day.

Mr. Gibson, please make your statement.

**STATEMENT OF SLOAN D. GIBSON, MA, MPA, NOMINEE TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

Mr. GIBSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I would also like to thank Senator Reed, even though he is no longer present.

One of the great privileges of working at the USO these last 5 years is the opportunity to get to know and work closely with great public servants like Jack Reed.

Chairman Sanders, Ranking Member Burr, 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 most of you. I have met with both of you individually and appreciate your strong support for veterans and for the mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs. I have listen 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 priority set forth by the President and the Secretary, and if confirmed, will do my utmost to ensure that 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, reducing veteran homelessness, among many other areas.

As a veteran and one who cares deeply about the welfare of our veterans and their families, I want to express my gratitude for the passion, the 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 possible support to America's veterans and their families.

If confirmed, I would expect to serve as the chief operating officer, working under the Secretary's direction to manage day-to-day operations at 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 measured against 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. Because of my close association with today's troops and families through my work at the USO, I believe that I have useful insights into meeting our 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 their families.

I 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 dialog. If confirmed, I look forward to engaging 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 nongovernment organizations can and do work collaboratively with government departments to accomplish more for those they serve. If confirmed, I would support VA's continued collaboration with these vital partners.

I am especially proud of how the USO supported the changing needs of today's troops and military families. Our efforts on behalf of wounded and injured troops, their families and caregivers, and families of the fallen have been especially meaningful.

We came to understand that healing is about more than what happens in an operating room or physical therapy room. It 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, to keep families together and to keep them strong, to build a plan for the future, either through continuing education or a new career, and to provide a support network in the event that progress falters.

Much of this work is accomplished through collaborative relationships with best-in-class organizations, some of whom are represented in this room today.

We establish clear goals and measurements to ensure that we are meeting the needs of troops and families and delivering on our promise. Service organizations, such as the one I have led the last 5 years, must be both effective at delivering measurable outcomes for those that it serves, as well as efficient in the use of resources.

Trust is earned when these two objectives are consistently met, the trust of the people served as well as the trust of those who invest resources in the enterprise. VA exists to serve veterans and 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 the VA to achieve continued success on these terms as well as to ensure that the VA continues to be the 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.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Gibson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SLOAN D. GIBSON, NOMINEE FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY,  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

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 dialog. 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.

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RESPONSE TO PREHEARING QUESTIONS HON. BERNARD SANDERS TO SLOAN D. GIBSON, NOMINEE TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

*Question 1.* Have you discussed with Secretary Shinseki the duties he would like you to perform, or the role he would like you to assume, as Deputy Secretary if you are confirmed?

Response. Yes. The Secretary expects me, if confirmed, to serve as the Chief Operating Officer with responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the Department.

*Question 2.* Will you have a policymaking role at VA independent of the Secretary?

Response. No, unless tasked by the Secretary to address a specific issue. I would expect to support the Secretary's policymaking role by sharing my views during the policy development process and ensuring that policy decisions are communicated and implemented throughout VA.

*Question 3.* Will you be VA's Chief Operating Officer? If so, please describe in detail what you understand the position of COO to be, both generally and with specificity as to VA.

Response. Yes. The Secretary sets the broad direction and the strategic goals for the organization. If confirmed as Deputy Secretary, I would expect to be responsible for ensuring continued alignment of the organization with the Secretary's goals through participation in the Department's processes that establish subordinate goals and objectives, develop operating and financial plans to achieve the goals, ensure metrics are in place that accurately measure progress, monitor execution of the plans and performance against the goals, provide ongoing direction and needed course correction to ensure goals are met, and ensure the mechanisms for accountability are effective. I would also expect to actively facilitate collaboration both in-

ternally and externally. From the high level briefings I have received, I know former Deputy Secretary Gould and Chief of Staff Riojas have established a strong track record in these areas and if confirmed, I would look to continue their important work.

*Question 4.* Apart from what you and the Secretary have discussed with respect to your duties, have you formulated any thoughts on what your specific responsibilities will be as Deputy and how you will approach them?

Response. If confirmed, I will first want to ensure that I am the most effective Deputy to the Secretary I can possibly be. That will require a close working relationship with the Secretary and a clear understanding of his expectations day to day. While I bring particular skills and knowledge to VA, I recognize that with an organization as large and complex as VA, that I have much to learn, especially during my early days and weeks. Actively seeking input, at all levels of the organization, and carefully listening to our Veterans and those that are supporting them each day will be essential.

*Question 5.* What is your motivation to seek this position?

Response. I hope to make a positive difference for America's Veterans, their families and survivors.

My father was a Veteran—a B-17 tail gunner in the European theater during World War II and later an officer in the Air Force. There was nothing of which he was more proud than his service to our country. My grandfather, a Veteran of World War I, was an infantry soldier in the 3rd Division, wounded by machine gun fire at the Battle of the Marne, the same battle where today's 3rd Infantry Division earned its nickname "Rock of the Marne." Perhaps the proudest moment of his life was when he received the decorations to which he was entitled, including the Purple Heart, at the age of 92. I served in uniform and have had the privilege over the past five years of leading an organization that has transformed its support for America's Servicemembers and military families, especially for our wounded, ill, and injured Servicemembers, their families and caregivers and our families of the fallen. The opportunity to serve at VA, should I be confirmed, would be an extension of that work and I would bring the same passion to VA that has driven my work at the USO.

*Question 6.* What do you see as the biggest challenges facing VA at this time—as to the Department as a whole, and specifically in VBA, VHA, and NCA?

Response. For the Department as a whole, I believe the over-arching challenge is continuing the transformation already underway to become a 21st Century organization—people-centric, results-driven, and forward-looking. As it relates to VHA, VBA, and NCA, their top challenges are to continue to focus on achieving the aggressive and ambitious goals the Secretary has set forward to improve access, eliminate the claims backlog, and end Veteran homelessness.

*Question 7.* What will be your top three priorities after assuming the role of Deputy Secretary?

Response. If confirmed, my first order of business would be to learn more about the Department. Beyond that, I would expect to work closely with the Secretary, the Chief of Staff and other senior leaders within the Department to 1) improve access of Veterans to VA benefits and services, 2) eliminate the claims backlog, and 3) end Veteran homelessness.

*Question 8.* What specific experiences from your prior professional positions do you believe have prepared you to manage VA?

Response. My business experience in both for-profit and not-for-profit sectors instilled the discipline and accountability that follows from regularly meeting a bottom line and delivering results that meet the expectations of a range of stakeholders.

I bring a passion for serving America's Veterans and their families. Because of my prior service in uniform and my close association with today's Servicemembers and families through my work at the USO, I believe I have useful insights into meeting the needs of Veterans and their families. I have built close working relationships with senior Department of Defense leaders and believe that experience could be valuable as VA and DOD continue to collaborate to meet the needs of transitioning Servicemembers and their families. I have also worked with Members of Congress to support our Servicemembers and military families. I understand the importance of these relationships and the need for productive exchanges of information. Having led a non-profit organization supporting the military, I also bring an understanding of how Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) and other non-governmental organizations can best work collaboratively with government departments to accomplish more for those they serve.

Service organizations, such as the USO, 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. I believe my organizational experience in the effective and efficient delivery of measurable outcomes would be directly relevant to VA.

*Question 9.* If confirmed, what efforts will you undertake to make certain that VA is aware of, and responsive to, the needs of the veterans' community? Do you plan to meet regularly with veterans' organizations?

Response. I believe it is vital for the senior leaders of any organization to actively and continuously seek input from those it serves, from front line staff, and from others that have strong vested interests in outcomes. I know that the Secretary also shares this commitment and during his tenure has regularly met with the leaders of national VSOs, speaks at VSO conventions and other meetings, and engages Veterans and VA's workforce in the field as he travels to VA facilities. Consistent with the Secretary's approach, if confirmed, I would expect to regularly spend time speaking directly with Veterans and their families, VA's employees, and, together with the Secretary, with the leaders of the many great VSOs that do so much to support Veterans and their families every day.

*Question 10.* How would you, as Deputy Secretary, work with the Office of Inspector General? The Office of the General Counsel?

Response. I look forward to working closely with the General Counsel's Office to ensure that VA actions comport with all applicable laws and regulations. I also appreciate the important role of the Office of Inspector General in oversight review to improve the economy, effectiveness and efficiency of VA programs, and to prevent and detect criminal activity, waste, abuse and fraud. I anticipate a candid and supportive relationship that serves the interests of Veterans and stakeholders. If confirmed, I look forward to meeting with the Inspector General and the General Counsel.

*Question 11.* Are you more of a hands-on manager or do you tend to rely on significant delegation? Do you seek to achieve consensus with those on your management team before making a decision or do you generally gather relevant information and input, and then make a decision?

Response. Results are what matters. A good executive adapts his management style to the immediate situation at hand. My preferred style is to delegate and monitor progress. When an organization is staffed with strong leaders, they need the space to innovate and develop their own approach to delivering results against established goals. When expected results are not being delivered, a more hands-on approach is warranted.

It is preferable to pursue consensus, seeking buy-in from those who will be charged with delivering results. There are occasions, such as times of crisis, where this may not always be feasible.

*Question 12.* VA has long had the reputation of being a stovepipe organization. Please describe how you intend to work with the three Under Secretaries and with the various Assistant Secretaries to ensure that all components of the Administration and organizations are working together to achieve a "One VA" focus.

Response. The transition to an integrated, collaborative organization, something I know is a priority to the Secretary, begins with a true customer focus as I believe is reflected in the Department's Strategic Plan. Metrics that gauge performance relevant to individual Veteran outcomes with clear lines of accountability that transcend organizational boundaries are essential. Some training, delegation, and certain forcing functions may be required. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Secretary and other senior leaders on their ongoing efforts to strengthen VA capabilities through both internal and external collaboration.

*Question 13.* Do you anticipate having a role in selecting other political appointees to VA? What are your views on the key qualifications for such individuals?

Response. If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to provide input into the selection of political appointees. While strong leadership and management skills and a powerful intellect are essential, I would also place emphasis on passion for serving Veterans, the specific knowledge and skills immediately required in the position, and drive and determination to make a real difference.

*Question 14.* As you might know, VA health care dollars are appropriated two years in advance. Do you support appropriating funds for two years rather than annually for the remainder of VA's appropriations—both mandatory and discretionary?

Response. I am aware that VA has benefited from receiving advance appropriations for Medical Care programs. However, I would want to understand more about

this issue before providing more detailed views on any expansion of the accounts included in advance appropriation.

*Question 15.* Despite many efforts, there appear to be continued challenges in communicating effectively with returning OEF/OIF veterans on the availability of VA services and benefits. What do you believe VA can do to help ensure that transition from active duty is as seamless as possible and that returning Servicemembers know about what VA has to offer them?

Response. I believe several noteworthy steps have already been taken to ensure returning Servicemembers are aware of VA benefits and services. The VA benefits briefings included in the now mandatory and enhanced Transition Assistance Program are clearly a step in the right direction. I'm also aware of the DOD requirement that all Servicemembers have access to the eBenefits portal. This would seem to be a great step forward in meeting the VA information needs of all Servicemembers, including OEF/OIF Veterans. Certainly, new media outreach, advertising and social networking also helps raise awareness. I believe it is also important for Veterans and the public to be aware of the positive experience Veterans have at VA every day and I know the Department is taking additional steps to share this important information. Perhaps the most powerful channel is word of mouth. For any service organization, customer satisfaction with the service experience determines what customers tell others.

*Question 16.* VA must continue to make progress in improving the timeliness and quality of VA's claims adjudication process. What recommendations do you have to complement existing transformation efforts?

Response. Our Veterans deserve timely, accurate, and fair resolution of their claims. That is the basis for the Secretary's priority to eliminate the claims backlog in 2015. I have received a very general briefing and read other publicly available materials summarizing the people, process, and technology transformation underway at VBA. I have also observed the recent trends in backlog reduction. If confirmed, I look forward to learning much more about this transformation, including having the opportunity to speak with Veterans with recent experience submitting claims, visiting Regional Offices to speak with those processing claims, and meeting with VSOs to better understand the vital role they are playing in this important work.

*Question 17.* VA's Deputy Secretary currently serves as the Co-Chairman of the VA/DOD Joint Executive Committee along with the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. How would you view your role as Co-Chairman? What priorities would you bring to this position for improving the level of collaboration and cooperation between VA and DOD?

Response. I believe the role of the Co-Chairman is to provide the leadership that sets the context for a strong collaborative relationship, and ensures the Joint Executive Committee is focused on the right issues and that plans are in place, including metrics and milestones, to resolve any issues. Where obstacles arise on joint VA/DOD issues that cannot be resolved at the staff level, it is important that they be elevated to the co-chair level for resolution.

I have worked closely and built strong relationships with senior DOD leaders over the past five years. I believe it is important to harness the shared concern for transitioning Servicemembers, Veterans, and their families and develop a clear understanding of DOD's perspective and priorities, and find ways to best serve transitioning Servicemembers and Veterans while also helping our collaborative partners achieve their desired outcomes.

*Question 18.* What role do you believe the VA/DOD Joint Executive Committee could play in addressing the needs of survivors of military sexual trauma?

Response. I am aware that the VA and the Administration more broadly have made the issue of military sexual trauma (MST) a top priority including ensuring the fairness of the disability claims process as it relates to MST claims. I am aware that the JEC serves as an oversight forum for transition issues, among the many other important VA/DOD issues. I believe it is important that transitioning Servicemembers are made aware of the wide range benefits and services available to them as they become Veterans, including those related to providing health care and benefits for those who have been the victims of military sexual trauma. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the VA and DOD's work in this area.

*Question 19.* In 2012, over 62,600 veterans were homeless on any given night. If confirmed as Deputy Secretary, how would you ensure that VA's homeless veterans programs are running efficiently? What role would you envision for yourself with regard to interagency and public-private efforts to end homelessness among veterans?



Response. While the elimination of Veteran homelessness requires interagency and public-private collaboration, I believe VA bears the direct responsibility for this important initiative. As a point person for interagency collaboration, I believe the Deputy Secretary should serve as a champion for the Secretary's goal within government and with the community of potential external partner organizations. As with other initiatives, I believe monitoring the right Veteran-centered measurable outcomes and implementing continuous improvement processes are vital to success. If confirmed, this top priority of the Secretary would also be among my top priorities.

*Question 20.* Over eight million veterans are enrolled in VA health care, over six million of which utilize the system. The size and scope of VA health care is the largest health care system in the country. However, often times, VA medical centers act like 152 separate corporations, rather than leveraging the benefits of being part of a system.

a. What skills would you bring to VA to help implement a more systems-based approach to health care delivery?

Response. I believe this is another opportunity for improved internal and external collaboration. While the size of VA's health care enterprise creates management challenges, it also offers extraordinary potential to leverage best in class practices across a large delivery system. As with any initiative to improve collaboration, it should include a focus on customer outcomes, relentless measurement, continuous improvement processes, and accountability for results. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the Under Secretary for Health to increase collaboration inside the organization as well as learn more about our efforts to seek collaborative relationships with other leading health care quality organizations and to learn from other best-in-class health care organizations.

b. Specifically, how would you advise the Secretary on improvements to the existing contracting and staffing processes to ensure care can be delivered efficiently and effectively to the veterans who need it?

Response. I strongly believe in the Secretary's efforts to continue to expand access to care for Veterans who have served this country. VA has taken significant steps to expand access both through the deployment of mobile health units and clinics and through the expansion of telehealth. In addition, when VA cannot provide the necessary care or when Veterans are not able to travel the distance from their home to the Medical Center, I understand that VA is able to purchase these services in the local community. If confirmed, I would want to learn more about these effort and other tools the agency is utilizing to ensure care can be delivered efficiently and effectively to Veterans.

*Question 21.* Delivery of quality, effective, and timely mental health care remains a significant challenge to VA. While VA successfully completed the hiring of over 1,600 new mental health professionals, much work remains to be done.

a. If confirmed, how do you intend to work with the Under Secretary for Health to address this problem?

Response. Over the past five years, particularly as the USO expanded support for wounded, ill, and injured Servicemembers and their families, I have been asked from time to time what kept me awake at night. My answer has always been the challenge in meeting all the behavioral health needs of our Servicemembers and families, including those transitioning out of the military. Our Veterans deserve timely, effective, and compassionate mental health care. VA is responsible for providing this care and accountable for meeting appropriate standards. VA delivers quality mental health care through its system of medical centers, clinics, Vet Centers, and other points of care. It has been clear to me that mental health care has been a priority for the Secretary and the Administration as a whole and they have made significant strides in this area while recognizing more work remains.

b. Where do you think opportunities for improvement exist?

Response. Hiring the additional mental health professionals is a very positive step, and I would like to recognize the Committee for your focus on this issue over the last number of years. When I consider organizational process, I think in terms of "inputs" leading to "activities," which lead to "outputs," "outcomes," and finally "impact." In this context, the additional mental health professionals are a very important input. An informed view on opportunities for improvement would require much more in-depth knowledge of VA's entire approach to mental health care—from inputs through impact—than I have at this time. This would include learning more about VA's collaboration with other government agencies, non-profit organizations, the private sector, medical research institutions, and others. If confirmed, I assure the Committee that the issue of mental health care would be a priority for me.

*Question 22.* What would be your priorities for improving the integration and use of information technology (IT) to improve the delivery of VA benefits and services?

Response. My priorities would be on ensuring the continued transition to an integrated, collaborative organization based on a true customer focus; continuing the drive to improving access of Veterans to VA benefits and services, eliminating the claims backlog, and ending Veteran homelessness. Two examples of projects that I know are a priority for the Department that reflect the importance they have placed on leveraging IT tools in benefits delivery are the VA's paperless, electronic claims processing system, the Veterans Benefits Management System, and eBenefits, the DOD/VA web-based application for Servicemembers, Veterans, and their families to access information about benefits.

*Question 23.* One of VA's major IT initiatives is modernizing VistA to support the VA/DOD integrated electronic health records program. What role would you see yourself playing in this effort and in broader efforts around data sharing and interoperable health care records?

Response. As an outside observer of the VA's work in this area, I commend the Secretary for focusing on insuring our Veterans' health care is based on availability of a complete and comprehensive record of their treatment history. This includes data from our Department of Defense partners, as well as data from providers nationwide who also render care to our Veterans. If confirmed, my role as Deputy Secretary will be to support the Secretary and build upon VA's successes in both expanding the types of data exchanged and the number of health care institutions participating in these exchanges.

*Question 24.* VA is one of the largest property-holding Agencies in the government and has identified tens of billions in facility improvements that should be made to ensure that facilities are functional and safe. The Department has also faced project management challenges with major medical facility construction projects. What steps do you think VA can take to right size and upgrade its physical footprint in an effective way?

Response. I am not yet sufficiently familiar with the capital asset portfolio to have well-informed opinions about right sizing and upgrading VA's physical plant. I recognize this is a significant challenge and opportunity for the Department and if confirmed, I would look forward to learning more about VA's long-term plan to ensure we have the safe and effective facilities needed to care for Veterans, now and long into the future.

I am familiar with the recent GAO report addressing challenges with major medical facility construction projects and understand that the Department is taking action to implement each of the recommendations raised. If confirmed, I would look forward to learning more about the VA's efforts to access best in industry practices for construction of major medical facilities.

*Question 25.* Acquisition is one area where VA can do more to find financial efficiencies, yet there seem to be challenges in terms of timeliness and decentralized execution of policies, along with other issues. If confirmed as Deputy Secretary, what would your priorities be for ensuring efficient acquisitions Department-wide?

Response. While I have not been fully briefed on these opportunities, I believe this is an excellent example of the potential for improved internal collaboration. I am aware of VA's and the Administration's emphasis on strategic sourcing, and support this as one way to leverage the Department's and Federal spending and improve operational efficiencies. I am aware that as the Department has pursued this strategy they have focused on both the Secretary's commitment to supporting service-disabled and Veteran-owned businesses and ensuring them the opportunity to compete in fulfilling the requirements. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about VA's work to leverage acquisition expertise and policy to achieve optimal efficiency and effectiveness throughout the Department.

*Question 26.* Do you agree to supply the Committee with such non-privileged information, materials, and documents as may be requested by the Committee in its oversight and legislative capacities for so long as you serve in the position of Deputy Secretary?

Response. If confirmed, I will work with senior leaders in the Department so that the Committee is provided with information in an accurate and timely manner so as to perform its important oversight and legislative responsibilities.

*Question 27.* Do you agree to appear before the Committee at such times and concerning such matters as the Committee might request for so long as you serve in the position of Deputy Secretary?

Response. Yes.

[The Committee questionnaire for Presidential nominees follows:]

**PART I: ALL OF THE INFORMATION IN THIS PART WILL BE MADE PUBLIC**

**1. Basic Biographical Information**

Please provide the following information.

<i>Position to Which You Have Been Nominated</i>	
<u>Name of Position</u>	<u>Date of Nomination</u>
Deputy Secretary Department of Veteran Affairs	September 11, 2013

<i>Current Legal Name</i>			
<u>First Name</u>	<u>Middle Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Suffix</u>
Sloan	Duncan	Gibson	IV

<i>Addresses</i>					
<u>Residential Address</u> (do not include street address)			<u>Office Address</u> (include street address)		
			Street: 2111 Wilson Blvd Suite 1200		
<u>City:</u> Washington	<u>State:</u> DC	<u>Zip:</u> 20007	<u>City:</u> Arlington	<u>State:</u> VA	<u>Zip:</u> 22201

<i>Other Names Used</i>						
<u>First Name</u>	<u>Middle Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Suffix</u>	<u>Check if Maiden Name</u>	<u>Name Used From</u> (Month/Year) (Check box if estimate)	<u>Name Used To</u> (Month/Year) (Check box if estimate)
Sonny		Gibson			01/1968    Est <input type="checkbox"/>	06/1980    Est <input type="checkbox"/>
					Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/>

<i>Birth Year and Place</i>	
<b>Year of Birth</b> (Do not include month and day)	<b>Place of Birth</b>
1953	Albuquerque, NM

<i>Marital Status</i>					
Check All That Describe Your Current Situation:					
<b>Never Married</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Married</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Separated</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Annulled</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Divorced</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Widowed</b> <input type="checkbox"/>

<i>Spouse's Name</i> (current spouse only)			
<b>Spouse's First Name</b>	<b>Spouse's Middle Name</b>	<b>Spouse's Last Name</b>	<b>Spouse's Suffix</b>
Margaret	Duncan	Gibson	

<i>Spouse's Other Names Used</i> (current spouse only)						
<b>First Name</b>	<b>Middle Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Suffix</b>	<b>Check if Maiden Name</b>	<b>Name Used From</b> (Month/Year) (Check box if estimate)	<b>Name Used To</b> (Month/Year) (Check box if estimate)
Margaret	Lee	Duncan		X	8/1949 <input type="checkbox"/> Est	9/1982 <input type="checkbox"/> Est
					<input type="checkbox"/> Est	<input type="checkbox"/> Est

<i>Children's Names (if over 18)</i>			
<u>First Name</u>	<u>Middle Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Suffix</u>
Celia	Anne	Gibson	
Laura	Gibson	Able	

**2. Education**

List all post-secondary schools attended.

<u>Name of School</u>	<u>Type of School</u> (vocational/technical/trade school, college/university/military college, correspondence/distance/extension/online school)	<u>Date Began School</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate)	<u>Date Ended School</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate) (check "present" box if still in school)	<u>Degree</u>	<u>Date Awarded</u>
United States Military Academy	College	7/1971    Est <input type="checkbox"/>	6/1975    Est <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/>	BS	6/1975
University of Missouri-Kansas City	University	9/1978    Est <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	12/1979    Est <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/>	MA	12/1979
Harvard Kennedy School of Government	University	8/2004    Est <input type="checkbox"/>	6/2005    Est <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/>	MPA	6/2005
		Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/>		

### 3. Employment

**(A) List all of your employment activities, including unemployment and self-employment. If the employment activity was military duty, list separate employment activity periods to show each change of military duty station. Do not list employment before your 18th birthday unless to provide a minimum of two years of employment history.**

<u>Type of Employment</u> (Active Military Duty Station, National Guard/Reserve, USPHS Commissioned Corps, Other federal employment, State Government (Non-federal Employment), Self-employment, Unemployment, Federal Contractor, Non-Government Employment (excluding self-employment), Other)	<u>Name of Your Employer/Assigned Duty Station</u>	<u>Most Recent Position Title/Rank</u>	<u>Location</u> (City and State only)	<u>Date Employment Began</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate)	<u>Date Employment Ended</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate) (check "present" box if still employed)
Non-Government Employment	USO, Inc.	President and CEO	Arlington, VA	7/2008 Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est Present <input type="checkbox"/> X
Unemployment	Retired		Charleston, SC	3/2004 Est <input type="checkbox"/>	7/2008 Est <input type="checkbox"/>
Non-Government Employment	AmSouth Bancorporation	Vice Chairman and CFO	Birmingham, AL	11/1992 Est <input type="checkbox"/>	3/2004 Est <input type="checkbox"/>
Non-Government Employment	Bank South	Senior Vice President	Atlanta, GA	8/1983 Est X	11/1992 Est <input type="checkbox"/>
Non-Government Employment	First Union Corporation	Banking Officer	Charlotte NC	5/1982 Est X	8/1983 Est X
Non-Government Employment	American Safety Deposit	Co-Owner	Charlotte NC	6/1981 Est	5/1982 Est
Unemployment			Various	6/1980 Est	6/1981 Est
Active Military Duty Station	US Army	Captain	Ft. Leavenworth, KS	3/1978 Est	6/1980
Active Duty Military Station	US Army	1LT	Ft. Benning, GA	8/1975	3/1978 Est
Active Duty Military Station	US Army	2LT	Washington, DC	6/1975	8/1975

**(B) List any advisory, consultative, honorary or other part-time service or positions with federal, state, or local governments, not listed elsewhere.**

<u>Name of Government Entity</u>	<u>Name of Position</u>	<u>Date Service Began</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate)	<u>Date Service Ended</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate) (check "present" box if still serving)
None		Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est Present <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
		Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est Present <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
		Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est Present <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

**4. Honors and Awards**

**List all scholarships, fellowships, honorary degrees, civilian service citations, military medals, academic or professional honors, honorary society memberships and any other special recognition for outstanding service or achievement.**

- Army Commendation Medal
- National Defense Service Medal
- Ranger Tab
- Parachute Badge
- Distinguished Alumnus Hargrave Military Academy

**5. Memberships**

**List all memberships that you have held in professional, social, business, fraternal, scholarly, civic, or charitable organizations in the last ten years.**

**Unless relevant to your nomination, you do NOT need to include memberships in charitable organizations available to the public as a result of a tax deductible donation of \$1,000 or less, Parent-Teacher Associations or other organizations connected to schools attended by your children, athletic clubs or teams, automobile support organizations (such as AAA), discounts clubs (such as Groupon or Sam's Club), or affinity memberships/consumer clubs (such as frequent flyer memberships).**

<u>Name of Organization</u>	<u>Dates of Your Membership</u> (You may approximate)	<u>Position(s) Held</u>
West Point Society of Washington DC	2008-Present	Member
West Point Society of Birmingham, AL	2000-2004	Member
Hargrave Military Academy Board of Trustees	2007-2013	Trustee
Universal Solutions Initiative Advisory Board	2012-2013	Advisor
Charity Works Advisory Board	2012-2013	Advisor



**6. Political Activity**

**(A) Have you ever been a candidate for or been elected or appointed to a political office?**  
 No

<u>Name of Office</u>	<u>Elected/Appointed/ Candidate Only</u>	<u>Year(s) Election Held or Appointment Made</u>	<u>Term of Service (if applicable)</u>
N/A			

**(B) List any offices held in or services rendered to a political party or election committee during the last ten years that you have not listed elsewhere.**

<u>Name of Party/Election Committee</u>	<u>Office/Services Rendered</u>	<u>Responsibilities</u>	<u>Dates of Service</u>
N/A			

**(C) Itemize all individual political contributions of \$200 or more that you have made in the past five years to any individual, campaign organization, political party, political action committee, or similar entity. Please list each individual contribution and not the total amount contributed to the person or entity during the year.**

<u>Name of Recipient</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Year of Contribution</u>
None		

**7. Publications**

**List the titles, publishers and dates of books, articles, reports or other published materials that you have written, including articles published on the Internet.**

<u>Title</u>	<u>Publisher</u>	<u>Date(s) of Publication</u>
Command Update	"On Patrol" published by the USO	Quarterly since Spring 2009
Introduction to Veterans Day weekend insert	USA Today	Veterans Day Weekend 2012
CEO Column	Various USO Newsletters	10+/- times per year since 2011
Blog Post	OverheadMyth.com	6/27/13

### 8. Public Statements

**(A) List any testimony, official statements or other communications relating to matters of public policy that you have issued or provided or that others presented on your behalf to public bodies or officials. None**

**(B) List any speeches or talks delivered by you, including commencement speeches, remarks, lectures, panel discussions, conferences, political speeches, and question-and-answer sessions. Include the dates and places where such speeches or talks were given.**  
Speeches

Keynote Speech at "A Hero's Welcome" Lakeshore Foundation	Birmingham, AL	8/22/13
Remarks and introduction of Cong. Jeff Miller at USO Congressional Service Event	Rayburn House Office Building	9/11/13
Brief remarks and introduction of FLOTUS	USO Warrior and Family Center Ft. Belvoir, VA	9/11/13

Remarks to USO Hawaii supporters	Honolulu	7/10/13
Remarks to USO Guam supporters	Guam	7/9/13
Remarks to USO Okinawa supporters	Futenma	7/7/13
Remarks to USO Japan supporters	Yokosuka, Japan	7/5/13
Remarks to USO Korea supporters	Seoul, South Korea	7/2/13
Remarks at USO Patriots Salute	Dallas, TX	6/9/13

Presentation at USO Corporate Partner Summit	Alexandria, VA	6/4/13
Brief Remarks at TAPS Memorial Day event	Arlington, VA	5/26/13
Remarks at USMC Evening Parade honoring SDG	Marine Corps Barracks Washington, DC	5/24/13
Remarks at congressional USO Care Package event	Rayburn Office Building	5/22/13
Remarks at Warrior Games Opening Event	Colorado Springs, CO	5/10/13
Remarks at USO Nashville Grand Opening	Nashville, TN	5/3/13
Keynote address at USO Leadership Conference	Nashville, TN	4/29/13
West Point Founder's Day Keynote address	Atlanta, GA	3/23/13
Remarks at USO Caregivers Conference	Camp Pendleton, CA	2/25/13
Remarks at Marine Corps Warrior Games Trial	San Diego, CA	2/25/13
Remarks at USO Ft. Belvoir center grand opening	Ft. Belvoir, VA	2/5/13
Remarks at closing bell on the NASDAQ	NYC, NY	12/27/12
Remarks at National Building Museum Symposium	Washington, DC	11/13/12
Remarks at American Airlines Skyball reception	Ft. Worth, TX	10/26/12
Remarks re USO at Bohemian Club	San Francisco, CA	10/5/12
Address at the American	Washington, DC	10/2/12

Logistics Association annual convention		
Remarks at USO Center groundbreaking	Bethesda, MD	11/7/12
Remarks at USO Mother's day boxes stuffing event	VPOTUS Residence Washington DC	05/10/12
Remarks at Warrior Games Opening	Colorado Springs, CO	4/30/12
Keynote Address at USO Leadership Conference	El Paso, TX	4/16/12
Remarks at Joining Forces Community Challenge Luncheon	Washington, DC	4/11/12
Remarks at USO South Carolina Gala dinner	Columbia, SC	1/31/12
Presentation at AUSA luncheon	Columbia, SC	1/31/12
Remarks to spouses of House Freshmen	Cannon House Office Bldg Washington, DC	12/6/12
Remarks at USO Ft. Campbell Grand Opening	Ft. Campbell, KY	11/30/11
Remarks to USO prospective supporters at Denver Country Club	Denver, CO	11/17/11
Remarks at Coke HQ Veterans Day event	Atlanta, GA	11/10/11
Remarks at American Airlines Skyball reception	Ft. Worth, TX	10/21/11
Remarks to spouses of Air Force senior leaders	Bolling AFB	10/13/11
Address at annual USO Gala	Washington, DC	10/5/11 and 11/2/12

Remarks at Pentagon CycleFest/Ride2Recovery event	Pentagon	9/18/11
Remarks at USO Caregivers Conference	Ft Bragg, NC	9/14/11
Remarks at USO Pentagon Exhibit Dedication	Pentagon	8/31/11
Remarks to prospective USO donors at Beaver Creek Club	Beaver Creek, CO	8/17/11
Remarks at National Guard Conference	Louisville, KY	7/26/11
Address to West Point Society of SC	Columbia, SC	7/15/11
Remarks at USO Dinner	Columbia, SC	7/14/11
Remarks at USO July 4 <sup>th</sup> event	Boston, MA	7/4/11
Remarks for Groundbreaking at new USO Ft. Belvoir center	Ft. Belvoir, VA	6/27/11
Remarks at USO Corporate Partner Summit	Arlington, VA	6/21/11
Remarks at USO donor event at Jordan Winery	Sonoma, CA	6/4/11
Remarks and Q&A at FIRE Conference	Laguna Beach, CA	5/26/11
Remarks at Congressional USO Care Package event	Rayburn Office Building	5/25/11
Keynote Address at GE Veterans Network Conference	National Harbor, MD	5/24/11
Remarks at Warrior Games Opening event	Colorado Springs, CO	5/16/11
Remarks at Dinner for USO center contractors	Arlington, VA	5/10/11

Address at US Army Installation Management Symposium	San Antonio, TX	4/20/11
Address at USO Leadership Conference	National Harbor, MD	3/28/11
Remarks at Kuwait America Foundation Fundraiser	Kuwait Embassy Washington, DC	3/6/11
Remarks at the National Guard Bureau Senior Leadership Conference	Washington, DC	2/28/11
Remarks to Kroger associates at Daytona 500	Daytona Beach, FL	2/20/11
Remarks at Congressional USO Care Package stuffing event	Rayburn House Office Building	2/9/11
Remarks at United Through Reading StoryBook Ball	La Jolla, CA	11/14/10
Remarks at USO donor event at Jordan Winery	Sonoma, CA	11/12/10
Remarks at USO Las Vegas Grand Opening	Las Vegas, NV	11/11/10
Keynote remarks at Coke HQ Veterans Day event	Atlanta, GA	11/10/10
Remarks at USO Auxiliary event	Houston, TX	11/1/10
Remarks to Charleston Area Military College Association	Charleston, SC	10/1/10
Remarks at USO Caregivers Conference	El Paso, TX	9/23/10
Remarks to Red Lobster Store Managers Convention	San Antonio, TX	8/31/10



Remarks at USMC Sunset Review reception	Arlington, VA	8/3/10
Remarks at annual USO Gala	Washington, DC	10/7/10
Remarks at USO Corporate Partner Summit	Arlington, VA	7/22/10
Remarks at Hope for America exhibit	Library of Congress	6/10/10
Remarks at USO center grand opening	Columbia, SC	6/3/10
Remarks at USO center Grand Opening	Ft. Riley, KS	5/25/10
Commencement Address at Hargrave Military Academy	Chatham, VA	5/16/10
Remarks at Warrior Games Opening Event	US Olympic Training Center Colorado Springs, CO	5/10/10
Remarks at event honoring USO	Bush Presidential Library College Station, TX	4/26/10
Remarks at USO Leadership Conference	National Harbor, MD	4/20/10
Remarks at USO Center grand opening	Ft. Bliss, TX	4/15/10
Keynote address at Association of Corporate Contribution Professionals	National Harbor, MD	3/15/10
Remarks at USO Community Strong Day	Ft. Hood, TX	12/11/09
Remarks at congressional USO Care Package stuffing event	Rayburn House Office Building	11/18/09
Remarks at Veterans Day Luncheon	Colorado Springs, CO	11/11/09
Remarks at American Airlines	Ft. Worth, TX	10/24/09

SkyBall event		
Remarks at USO Service Salute	Kaiserslautern, GE	10/17/09
Remarks at USO Gala	Washington, DC	10/07/09
Remarks to wounded warriors and guests at Washington Redskins game	Washington, DC	9/20/09
Remarks at National Children's Advocacy Center	Huntsville, AL	9/8/09
Remarks at USO Center opening Bush International Airport	Houston, TX	9/1/09
Address at the American Legion National Convention	Louisville, KY	8/26/09
Remarks at USMC Evening Parade iho SDG	Marine Corps Barracks Washington, DC	8/21/09
Address at VFW National Convention	Phoenix, AZ	8/18/09
Remarks at USO Corporate Partner Summit	Arlington, VA	6/24/09
Remarks at Colorado 30 Luncheon	Colorado Springs, CO	6/18/09
Remarks at USO Houston Reception	Houston, TX	6/1/09
Remarks at congressional USO Care Package stuffing	Rayburn House Office Building	5/19/09
Remarks at USO Magazine Launch event	Carnegie Institute Washington, DC	5/15/09
Remarks at USO event sponsored by The Hollywood Reporter	Hollywood, CA	5/12/09

Remarks at the World Affairs Council	Charlotte, NC	5/7/09
Address at USO Leadership Conference	Orlando, FL	4/13/09
Remarks at Critical Issues Roundtable	Tysons Corner, VA	2/27/09

I do not have access to my USO calendar covering August-December 2008 where additional such occasions might be found. There would be no occasions of remarks generally from February 2004 – July 2008. During my tenure at AmSouth, especially during my years as CFO, there were occasions when I spoke at investor conferences and was interviewed by the press. I do not have any way to even estimate the dates and locations. I also spoke often during my year chairing the United Way campaign in Central Alabama in 2001-2. I have completed an online search and included references to remarks and interviews from these periods.

**(C) List all interviews you have given to newspapers, magazines or other publications, and radio or television stations (including the dates of such interviews).**

#### Interviews

Radio Interview Sirius XM POTUS Channel	Washington, DC	9/10/13
TV Interview USO Congressional Service Event	Rayburn House Office Building	9/11/13
Post Newspaper Interview	USO Warrior and Family Center Ft. Belvoir, VA	9/11/13

On base media interview re Gary Sinise and LTDB	Futenma, Okinawa	7/7/13
Radio Interview re USO	Guam	7/9/13
Satellite Media Tour with celebrity chef Jennifer Behm supporting USO program; 15-20 stations across the country	Chevy Chase, VA	5/23/13

Local media interview re USO airport center opening	Nashville, TN	5/3/13
AFN Interview re USO Board meeting in Germany	Ramstein AFB, Germany	4/15/13
Interview WUSA-CBS local TV station re USO Center opening	Washington, DC	2/6/13
Media interviews at Jeep event for new USO center	Ft. Belvoir, VA	2/6/13
Media interviews for USO center grand opening	Ft. Belvoir, VA	2/5/13
Washington Post interview re new USO center	Ft. Belvoir, VA	2/4/13
Fox Business News Interview	NYC, NY	12/27/12
Sirius XM Radio POTUS Channel Interview	Arlington, VA	12/10/12
Interview with NY Times re USO	Arlington, VA	10/22/12
Interview with NEA Arts Magazine re USO entertainment	Arlington, VA	6/12/12
Interview This Week in Defense News	Washington, DC	05/22/12
Media Interview re USO Mother's Day Boxes	VPOTUS Residence Washington DC	5/10/12
Interview on Sirius Radio POTUS channel re USO	Washington, DC	4/10/12
Armed Forces Press Service Interview re USO	Arlington, VA	1/27/12
Satellite Media Tour re USO Wishbook; 20-25 interviews; various TV stations around the	NYC, NY	11/29/11

country		
Fox News.com Interview	Washington, DC	11/9/11
Satellite Media Tour re General Mills/USO campaign; 25+/- interviews with stations across the country	NYC, NY	11/8/11
CBS Sports TV Interview at 2012 Carrier Classic	Charleston, SC	11/9/12
Interview re USO with Newsweek	Arlington, VA	9/7/11
Halftime interview Univ of Houston vs UCLA	Houston, TX	9/3/11
Interview re USO Sesame Street partnership with Parents magazine	Arlington, VA	8/19/11
Seattle Post Intelligencer Interview	Arlington, VA	7/19/11
Federal News Radio Interview	Arlington, VA	7/8/11
Boston Radio Interview	Boston, MA	7/6/11
Various media interviews re new USO center	Ft. Belvoir, VA	6/27/11
Sirius XM POTUS station radio interview	Washington, DC	6/23/11
Interview for University of Missouri-Kansas City Alumni Magazine	Arlington, VA	1/19/11
Satellite Media tour re USO Campaign; 25+/- interviews with stations across the country	Ft. Myer, VA	12/21/10

Media interviews re 2 millionth USO Care Package	Ft. Belvoir, VA	12/4/10
Satellite Media Tour re USO/Tostitos campaign; 25-30 interviews with stations across the country	NYC, NY	11/30/11
Local media interviews re USO Las Vegas opening	Las Vegas, NV	11/11/10
Parade Magazine Interview	Arlington, VA	10/14/10
Media Interview re USO/Vineyard Vines campaign	Washington, DC	6/22/10
KEZW Radio Interview	Denver, CO	9/10/10
Radio Interview 850 KOA	Denver, CO	9/10/10
Media Interviews re new USO center at Sky Harbor Airport	Phoenix, AZ	9/1/10
Radio Interview KKHT	Houston, TX	7/27/10
Huffington Post Interview	Arlington, VA	6/23/10
Washington Times Interview	Washington, DC	6/17/10
Interview re Vineyard Vines by Georgetown Dish	Washington, DC	6/16/10
Interview WMAL radio	Washington, DC	5/28/10
Local Media Interviews for grand opening of USO Ft. Riley	Ft. Riley, KS	5/25/10
Fox News Interview	Arlington, VA	5/5/10
Fox Business Interview	Washington, DC	4/9/10
Dallas Business Journal Interview	Arlington, VA	4/2/10
Interview with MilitaryWire.com	Arlington, VA	3/23/10

Fox News Edge Interview	Washington, DC	2/4/10
Cincinnati Enquirer Interview	Arlington, VA	1/13/10
AP Interview re USO/Tostitos Football game in Kuwait	Arlington, VA	12/22/09
Morning Radio Show Interview with Bob and Tom	Washington, DC	12/16/09
Sideline Interview Army Navy Game	Philadelphia, PA	12/12/09
Satellite Media Tour for Community Strong Day at Ft. Hood following shooting;30+ interviews with stations across the country	Ft. Hood, TX	12/11/09
Federal News Radio Interview with Scott Carr	Washington, DC	11/19/09
Good Morning Arizona! KTVK-TV Interview	Phoenix, AZ	8/18/09
Interview NBC New York Nightly News	NYC, NY	8/11/09
Washington Post Magazine First Person Singular Interview	Arlington, VA	6/5/09
New York Times Interview	NYC, NY	6/29/09
Fox Business Money Forum Interview	NYC, NY	6/29/09
Interview Investor Business Daily	Arlington, VA	6/15/09
National Defense Radio Interview	Arlington, VA	6/4/09
Media Interview Memorial Day Parade	Washington, DC	5/25/09
Washington Times Interview	Washington, DC	5/19/09

Media Interview at USO Care Package stuffing with military children	Ft. Belvoir, VA	4/9/09
Interview with DefenseIQ.com	Arlington, VA	4/8/09
CSPAN Interview	Washington, DC	3/29/09
CFO.com	Washington, DC	7/2/10
New York Times	Birmingham, AL	2/21/95
American Banker	Nashville, TN	6/5/00

**9. Agreements or Arrangements**

X See OGE Form 278. (If, for your nomination, you have completed an OGE Form 278 Executive Branch Personnel Public Financial Disclosure Report, you may check the box here to complete this section and then proceed to the next section.)

**As of the date of filing your OGE Form 278, report your agreements or arrangements for: (1) continuing participation in an employee benefit plan (e.g. pension, 401k, deferred compensation); (2) continuation of payment by a former employer (including severance payments); (3) leaves of absence; and (4) future employment.**

**Provide information regarding any agreements or arrangements you have concerning (1) future employment; (2) a leave of absence during your period of Government service; (3) continuation of payments by a former employer other than the United States Government;**



and (4) continuing participation in an employee welfare or benefit plan maintained by a former employer other than United States Government retirement benefits.

<u>Status and Terms of Any Agreement or Arrangement</u>	<u>Parties</u>	<u>Date</u> (month/year)

**10. Lobbying**

In the past ten years, have you registered as a lobbyist? If so, please indicate the state, federal, or local bodies with which you have registered (e.g., House, Senate, California Secretary of State).

No

**11. Testifying Before the Congress**

(A) Do you agree to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Congress upon the request of such Committee? Yes

(B) Do you agree to provide such information as is requested by such a committee? Yes

[Letters from the Office of Government Ethics follows:]



United States  
**Office of Government Ethics**  
1201 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20005-3917

OCT - 2 2013

The Honorable Bernard Sanders  
Chairman  
Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On September 19, 2013, the Office of Government Ethics (OGE) transmitted to the Committee the financial disclosure report of Sloan D. Gibson in connection with his nomination for the position of Deputy Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs. Enclosed are a letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs and a letter from Mr. Gibson supplementing his ethics agreement and forwarding an amended page to his financial disclosure report.

We have reviewed this additional submission and have also obtained advice from the Department of Veterans Affairs concerning any possible conflict in light of its functions and the nominee's proposed duties. Based on the information provided, OGE continues to believe that Mr. Gibson is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of interest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Walter M. Shaub, Jr.".

Walter M. Shaub, Jr.  
Director

Enclosures



United States  
**Office of Government Ethics**  
1201 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20005-3917

**SEP 19 2013**

The Honorable Bernard Sanders  
Chairman  
Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In accordance with the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, I enclose a copy of the financial disclosure report filed by Sloan D. Gibson, who has been nominated by President Obama for the position of Deputy Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs.

We have reviewed the report and have obtained advice from the agency concerning any possible conflict in light of its functions and the nominee's proposed duties. Also enclosed is an ethics agreement outlining the actions that the nominee will undertake to avoid conflicts of interest. Unless a date for compliance is indicated in the ethics agreement, the nominee must fully comply within three months of confirmation with any action specified in the ethics agreement.

Based thereon, we believe that this nominee is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of interest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don W. Fox".

Don W. Fox  
Principal Deputy Director

Enclosures

[A letter from the Designated Agency Ethics Official, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs follows:]



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
Designated Agency Ethics Official

SEP 26 2013

Walter M. Shaub, Jr  
Director  
Office of Government Ethics  
Suite 500  
1201 New York Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20005-3917

Dear Mr. Shaub:

I am forwarding the revised Public Financial Disclosure Report (SF-278) of Sloan D. Gibson, whom President Obama has nominated to serve as Deputy Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Mr. Gibson advised that he inadvertently omitted his uncompensated position as an advisor to Universal Solutions Initiative (USI), a technology services company. He resigned from that position on August 6, 2013. Mr. Gibson has added that position to Schedule D.I, Positions Held Outside the U.S. Government. He has also submitted an amendment to his ethics agreement concerning action he will take to avoid any conflict of interest or appearance of one in connection with USI.

I have reviewed the attached amendment and previously undisclosed position and find that Mr. Gibson's report is complete and discloses no unresolved conflicts of interest under applicable law or regulation. His assurances in his ethics agreement and the enclosed amendment thereto resolve any concern about real or apparent conflicts of interest that may arise from the financial interests disclosed in Mr. Gibson's report.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Renée L. Szybala".

Renée L. Szybala  
Associate General Counsel and  
Alternate Designated Agency Ethics Official

Enclosure

[A letter from Sloan D. Gibson to the Office of General Counsel,  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs follows:]

September 25, 2013

Mr. Walter A. Hall (023)  
Assistant General Counsel and  
Designated Agency Ethics Official  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Mr. Hall:

I am writing to amend the financial disclosure report that I signed on July 23, 2013, and to supplement the ethics agreement that I signed on September 12, 2013.

Enclosed is a new page that I have identified as Page 11. Please substitute this new page 11 for the current page 11 of my financial disclosure report. This new page discloses a new position that I inadvertently omitted from Schedule D.I of my financial disclosure report. I resigned from this position on August 6, 2013.

If I am confirmed for the position of Deputy Secretary, for a period of one year after my resignation, I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter involving specific parties in which Universal Solutions Initiative is a party or represents a party, unless I am first authorized to participate, pursuant to 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502(d).

I have been advised that this amendment letter will be posted publicly, consistent with 5 U.S.C. § 552, on the website of the U.S. Office of Government Ethics with other ethics agreements of Presidential nominees who file public financial disclosure reports.

Sincerely,



Chairman SANDERS. Thank you very much, Mr. Gibson.

Let me begin by asking you a very simple question though it is an important question. I hope you will give a straightforward answer on it. In your judgment, very briefly, what is the VA doing today that they are doing very well and what are they doing today where we can see some significant improvements? So, I want your assessment of where we are today. In any institution as large as the VA, it is going to have its strengths. It is going to have its weaknesses. Please give me an honest assessment in your judgment.

Mr. GIBSON. Yes, sir. Thank you for the question, sir. I think day in and day out today the VA is delivering great care and support

tens of thousands of times to veterans at VA medical centers, at community-based outpatient clinics, and through other means and channels.

I think there are opportunities for the public to know more about all those great successes and the great work that VA is doing day in and day out which we talked about during our earlier visit.

I think some of the most important work happening at VA today has to do with the transformation of VA to become a true 21st century organization, and therein lies some of the great progress that is being made as well as some of the opportunities for continued improvement.

So as the investments in people, process, and technology continue to be made, we see progress in the benefits claims backlog which, of course, is a very serious problem, a very serious issue; but it is also an area where more than 200,000 claims in the backlog have been reduced over the last 8 months, really putting it on a great trajectory to meeting the Secretary's very important goal.

So, I think continuing that transformation, continuing the investment in people, process, and technology; continuing to focus on individual veteran outcomes are the areas where the greatest opportunity exists.

Chairman SANDERS. And the weaknesses of the VA?

Mr. GIBSON. I think the weaknesses are the other side of the coin in the transformation effort. You alluded to and others have alluded to the claims backlog. I do not think anyone at VA considers the wait times that exist today as being acceptable, and so there is a very significant opportunity for continued improvement and I think a lot of the investments that are being made put us on the right track there.

Chairman SANDERS. Do you think that most veterans in this country know the benefits to which they are entitled? Has VA done as good a job as they should in reaching out and explaining to people what they are entitled to?

Mr. GIBSON. Mr. Chairman, I think a lot of good work has happened over the last several years. The public service announcement work that is under way right now, social networking, the Web site, the e-Benefits initiative where servicemembers are establishing accounts while they are still on active duty, the VA component of the new expanded required transition assistance program, I think all of these are steps in the right direction.

But clearly more work needs to be done. There are still many veterans out there that do not know what services are available to them, so there is more work to be done in that area.

Chairman SANDERS. All right. Say a word on the very, very important issue of the relationship between VA and DOD, something that at least on this Committee we are very concerned about.

Mr. GIBSON. Mr. Chairman, you said something during your remarks that I would be very quick to echo. In many respects we are serving and supporting the same person. There may be some chronological difference about timing there but it is still the same person.

The best possible service and support to those men and women in uniform, to those transitioning servicemembers, happens when we engineer the most seamless transition that we possibly can. I

think that is what they deserve and I think that is what the American people expect. We have got work to do there. There have been great accomplishments, again, the e-Benefits area and the transition assistance program.

Some of the other areas, the IDES, or Integrated Disability Evaluation System work, some of the crisis line work in the mental health space, all of those are examples of where progress has been made, but there is more work to be done.

Chairman SANDERS. I suspect that it is possible that you may end up, if confirmed, being the point person for the VA dealing with DOD.

Mr. GIBSON. Yes, sir.

Chairman SANDERS. In terms of information technology, in terms of the whole issue of VistA, do you want to say a word on that, where you are coming from?

Mr. GIBSON. I think part of the opportunity in that collaborative relationship is for each of the two organizations to understand their mutual objectives and then find the common ground to achieve what needs to be achieved for the servicemen and women.

I have gotten some briefings on the Joint Executive Committee. I would expect that to be a focal point for a lot of the interaction with DOD and the work on the integrated electronic health record, and I would look forward to wading into that space with vigor and pursuing those opportunities.

Chairman SANDERS. OK. Thank you.

Senator Burr.

Senator BURR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Gibson, some housekeeping if I may. First off, I want to start with, as the Ranking Member part of my role is to conduct oversight with regard to VA activities. This often leads to myself or my staff requesting information, statistics, briefings, or other materials; but often we run into long and unacceptable delays in receiving that information.

If confirmed, do you pledge to take steps to see that the long pending requests are finally met and that information is provided?

Mr. GIBSON. Senator Burr, I understand the importance of regular dialog and the importance of the right information to ensure that this Committee can exercise its oversight responsibilities, and I will work as closely as possible with the Secretary, with Assistant Secretary Mooney and with the other senior leaders to provide that information.

Senator BURR. If confirmed, do you pledge to take steps to ensure that going forward my staff and I will be provided with the requested information in a timely fashion?

Mr. GIBSON. Senator Burr, we will do, I will do everything, if confirmed, possible to provide you with the information required in a timely fashion.

Senator BURR. If confirmed, will you be proactive in alerting the Committee, including both sides of the aisle, to any significant issues involving the VA?

Mr. GIBSON. I am going to digress from the formulaic answer here, Senator Burr. I think in all of my experience with Members of Congress and frankly just in building relationships, I think understanding and having that kind of open dialog is vital to building

trust; and I commit to you that I will do everything I can to build that foundation of trust.

Senator BURR. As you can tell from the granularity of my questions, my level of trust is not real high right now.

Mr. GIBSON. Sir, we are going to work on that.

Senator BURR. If confirmed, do you pledge to ensure that individuals are held accountable if they are impeding the flow of information to this Committee?

Mr. GIBSON. Yes, sir.

Senator BURR. Mr. Sloan, do you believe VA is a visionary body?

Mr. GIBSON. Senator Burr, I think that—I am not sure exactly what I expected as I walked in and began my preparation for this hearing. Like everyone else, I read the newspaper and what I found, I was very pleased with.

I think there is some visionary work that is happening inside VA. I point to the claims backlog as a good example of that. No one is happy with where things are right now. No one is satisfied. Where we are in terms of timeliness is not acceptable.

But I think there is some exceptional work going on right now designed to permanently eradicate the claims backlog. The innovative work to integrate investments in people, process, and technology, I think, are exactly the right things to do.

Now, I learned enough about that in the course of an hour and one-half in a conference room at 810 Vermont. If confirmed, I look forward to going out and talking with veterans who have recent claims experience, in talking with VSOs that are such an integral part of that process, to talking with front-line staff that are actually doing the work of processing claims day in and day out, because that is part of understanding whether or not that visionary work is really happening.

So, I think there are clearly examples of where that is taking place. I think there are potentially other opportunities.

Senator BURR. If you could choose one cultural change that you could make at VA, what would it be today?

Mr. GIBSON. Senator Burr, the honest answer is that I do not feel like I have the visibility into the internal operating environment to be able to say that.

I do think that for any organization, any service organizations, and one of the lessons that I have learned is that a sense of urgency is a vital quality; that making crisp, timely decisions and then moving expeditiously but prudently to act, to take care of those that we serve is vitally important.

So, from the outside looking in, I would offer that as conjecture but, if confirmed, I look forward to having the opportunity to understand more about the internal operating environment at VA and where we have opportunities to do even better.

Senator BURR. When confirmed, that clock will start and I will assure you about 6 months later I am going to ask you both of these questions again.

Mr. GIBSON. OK, sir.

Senator BURR. It is frustrating to the Committee that we seem to always be in crisis management mode. As we look out, just like you in your financial services career, could look out and see where the customers of the future were, we are looking at the veterans



of the future. We know pretty closely how many are going to come out of active duty over the next 10 years.

Mr. GIBSON. Yes, sir.

Senator BURR. And when we look at \$60 billion worth of construction backlog, when we look at the backlog in disability claims, we do not look at it from a standpoint of today's numbers, we look at it from a standpoint of what is in front of us.

I hope that you will be able to share with this Committee on an ongoing basis how Congress might be able to help, not just solve the problems of today at VA but to prepare for the customers of VA in the future.

I look forward, Mr. Chairman, to an expedited process with Sloan Gibson.

Chairman SANDERS. Thank you very much, Senator Burr.

Senator Blumenthal, do you have some questions?

**STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD BLUMENTHAL,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM CONNECTICUT**

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Just a couple, mainly just to thank Mr. Gibson for his service to our Nation in uniform and also for your service in the private sector, dedicated to this cause and now as, hopefully, the confirmed Deputy at VA.

You and I have talked a little bit about some of the issues that concern me, but I would just join the Ranking Member's view that we will be asking you these questions again and again as you come before the Committee, particularly as to both the cultural and the policy issues that need to be addressed.

One area that has been a concern to me and a number of the organizations that represent our veterans concerns toxic chemicals, Agent Orange, and others that have been encountered by our troops serving abroad and at home. The Ranking Member has been a champion for some of our servicemembers who have suffered at Camp Lejeune and elsewhere.

This issue really is a bipartisan one. I sponsored legislation dealing with it, and perhaps you can address that issue just briefly.

Mr. GIBSON. Yes, sir. In the broadest possible sense from the outside looking in, I see VA's role as trying to remove obstacles particularly that are service-connected to a veteran and a family experiencing a happy and fulfilling life.

Certainly, exposure to toxic chemicals in the course of their service certainly falls into that category. I know the Secretary has taken courageous steps, particularly in the Agent Orange area and in some other areas to extend coverage, and I fully support that effort. I look forward, if confirmed, to being able to work closely with the Secretary and with other senior leaders in the Department to ensure that we meet those needs.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you. I am not going to duplicate some of the questioning that has gone on so far, but thank you, Mr. Chairman, for giving me this opportunity.

Chairman SANDERS. Mr. Gibson, thank you very much for your testimony. Thank you very much for your willingness to serve. We are going to try to move your nomination forward as quickly as we can. Thank you very much.

Mr. GIBSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman SANDERS. If Linda Schwartz could now come up please and Ms. Tobias, as well.

As we move to the second panel of nominees, I am pleased to turn to Senator Blumenthal to introduce Dr. Linda Schwartz the nominee for Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning. Senator Blumenthal, please begin.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for giving me this opportunity to introduce to the Committee Linda Spoonster Schwartz, who serves currently as the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Connecticut.

Let me just say I want to thank Commissioner Schwartz for her extraordinary service to our Nation and to the State of Connecticut in uniform and as a State official and now I am very confident as a member the VA team at the national level.

Linda Schwartz and I have worked together closely on a number of issues. I have been honored to serve and work with her as attorney general and now as a Senator. So, I know her well and I cannot recommend her highly enough to be Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning at the VA.

She was appointed commissioner in 2003, reappointed twice, and she has worked, Mr. Chairman, for Governors of both parties. She is truly a bipartisan public servant and her life is deeply rooted in her work as a nurse, both in the Air Force and in the civilian world. She served our country for 16 years in the Air Force.

She has worked on so many different issues that I hesitate even to name any of them because the breadth and scope of her commitment to our Nation's veterans is truly remarkable. To name a few, she has served on advisory committees to the Secretary of the VA, including committee on homeless veterans, readjustment for combat veterans, women veterans, and seriously mentally ill veterans.

She was the first woman elected president of the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs. I have worked with her on a number of issues including, for example, bringing together a national veterans organizations to hear the concerns and health issues of Vietnam-era veterans with Agent Orange-related illnesses. We also make sure that Connecticut veterans have been able to utilize their post-9/11 GI Federal and State benefits.

On these and many other issues, what she has been, Mr. Chairman, is quite simply a tireless advocate, a relentless fighter for our veterans and a personal emissary to each and every one of them.

She has a heart and a mind that is open to every single veteran no matter what their circumstances—whether they are homeless, or recovering addicts, or members of the boards of directors of Fortune 500 organizations—they are equal in her view.

She deals with them all as individual human beings who have served our country and who deserve both the compassion and the benefits that they are entitled to receive. I am very, very confident she will serve in this position with distinction and recommend her as highly as possible to this Committee.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman SANDERS. Thank you very much, Senator Blumenthal.

Dr. Schwartz, thank you for your service to our country and your fellow veterans. I understand you have a guest or so in the audience that you would like to introduce.

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Yes, I would like to introduce Marsha Four. Marsha Four was an Army nurse in Vietnam. She is the recipient of a Bronze Star and she was just recently elected vice president of the Vietnam Veterans of America. We have worked in the trenches of the homeless, at stand-downs together, and I am very proud that she is with me today.

I would also like to say that an unexpected visitor is Cheryl Sullivan, who is from the American Academy of Nursing; and many of my friends and people that I worked with over the years in the veterans service organizations are here to support me, and I thank them all for that.

Chairman SANDERS. And we welcome them. Thank you.

Now, I would like to introduce Ms. Constance Tobias. Constance B. Tobias is currently Chair of the Departmental Appeals Board at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Prior to her appointment in 2007, Ms. Tobias served as the Chief Veterans Law Judge for the Board of Veterans Appeals from 1995 to 2007. From 1993 to 1995, she was counsel to the Chairman of the BVA. From 1991 to 1993, she was a staff attorney in the office of the General Counsel for VA. She began her career in 1983 as a staff attorney for the BVA.

In 2007, Ms. Tobias received VA's Distinguished Career Award. She holds a BA from St. Augustine College, and a JD from Cornell University.

Ms. Tobias, I know that you have some support here today in the audience. This is the time to welcome your guests.

Ms. TOBIAS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to introduce my husband, Gary Tobias, of 30 years and my son, Zachary Tobias. My mother, Shirley Black, and sisters, Tatiana Jones, Kanita Black, and Anita Wade; and my nieces, Jessica Mason and Olivia Wade. They made the trip from North Carolina to be here today and I am so happy they are here.

Chairman SANDERS. We are happy they are here as well and we welcome them.

If both of you would be kind enough to stand.

Under the rules of this Committee, the testimony of all Presidential nominees appearing before the Committee shall be taken under oath, and I would ask that both of you stand and raise your right hands please.

Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give before the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God.

Ms. SCHWARTZ. I do.

Ms. TOBIAS. I do.

Chairman SANDERS. Thank you very much. Please be seated.

Dr. Schwartz, we would be pleased to hear your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF LINDA S. SCHWARTZ, RN, MSN, DrPH, FAAN, USAF (RET.), NOMINEE TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR POLICY AND PLANNING, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Senator Blumenthal, for those very kind words.

I am going to have to be very honest with you and tell you that even sitting here, the honor and pride that I feel that I have been nominated by President Obama for the position of Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning is overwhelming.

I am energized and enthusiastic about bringing and having the opportunity to serve on Secretary Shinseki's leadership team, especially now when so many activities and transformation of Veterans Affairs is occurring.

I know that Senator Blumenthal has told you that I had been the commissioner for 10 years and I have served three Governors, but I think it is very important for you each to know that I also have used VA health care services and programs since I was medically retired from the U.S. Air Force in 1983 after sustaining injuries in an aircraft accident while serving as an Air Force flight nurse.

I became, I was actually in a position where after that, I was a Reservist, after that I was not able to get any service or help from anyone else but VA, and it was a long time before I actually found them.

As I did, I became an advocate because I saw firsthand how hard it was for many veterans at the time to navigate a system that they did not fully understand.

Even though I was quite ill, the nurse in me knew there were better methods and awareness of health care which could and should be implemented. Because my injuries were so severe, I was not able to continue using my hands on nursing, bedside nursing; and that was very difficult for me because it was a profession I loved.

However, I was referred to the VA vocational rehabilitation program which gave me a great deal of support as I pursued a doctorate in public health from the Yale School of Medicine in New Haven, CT.

Statistical data and research was a very important component of both my course of study and my advocacy. We often hear the mantra, "speak truth to power," but I have learned that those words are empty unless you have the facts to support them.

I understand well the vital mission VA's Office of Policy and Planning has in developing strategic plans and delivering unbiased program analysis and evaluations to provide reliable information so VA can make informed decisions.

I am a firm believer in accountability: accountability to veterans, accountability to Congress, and accountability to the American people.

As a researcher, I am a seeker of truth. I use data, science, and evidence-based research to guide my thinking and conclusions. However, as a nurse and a veteran, I believe that this information must also be tempered with the realities of providing services to veterans that are consistent with the delivery systems available in the 21st century.

For VA to accomplish the core mission of serving our veterans, it is imperative that accountability, quality, and effectiveness continue to be a priority at every service level.

Just as our military has changed, the needs of our veterans and their families have changed. In order to ensure that veterans

across the Nation receive the very best VA has to offer, we must continue to challenge the status quo.

Today's veterans and their families have a vast array of needs and concerns which can range from housing and transportation to childcare and short-term financial and employment issues.

We need to build all on existing partnerships with Federal and State governments, our veterans service organizations, the private sector, communities, volunteers, and the faith-based communities. Partnerships are imperative to creating a quality continuum of care that all American veterans deserve and have earned. These partnerships help VA to address issues at the very local level where veterans live and work.

The face of America's veteran population is changing dramatically, and the expectation of service delivery is much longer than those we have expected over the last 50 years. I believe that VA can keep pace with the expectations of the consumer base by continuing to refine and refresh and using creative initiatives and a broad range of problem solving for veterans of every generation.

For the last 40 years, I have devoted my life and profession to caring for others as a practicing nurse, a researcher, and an advocate for veterans. Keeping faith with the men and women who have and are wearing the uniform has been one of the most fundamental and overriding purposes of my work and a guide star for my life journey.

Challenging the status quo and assuring the continuing of services that are worthy of the veterans we serve, I intend to impact through leadership, collaboration, and a team approach.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Schwartz follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. LINDA SPOONSTER SCHWARTZ, RN, MSN, DRPH, FAAN, NOMINEE TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR POLICY AND PLANNING, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Good morning Chairman Sanders, Ranking Member Burr, distinguished Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am deeply honored that President Obama has nominated me for the position of Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). I am energized by the opportunity to serve as part of Secretary Shinseki's leadership team to continue to transform the Department of Veterans Affairs to meet the many challenges Veterans face in the 21st century.

I currently serve as the Commissioner of Veteran Affairs for the State of Connecticut. I was first appointed Commissioner in 2003 and reappointed in 2007 and 2011, having the distinct honor of serving three Connecticut Governors. My life is deeply rooted in my profession as a nurse, my service in the United States Air Force and my advocacy for America's Veterans.

I have used VA health care and benefits programs since I was medically retired from the U.S. Air Force in 1986 after sustaining injuries in an aircraft accident while serving as an Air Force Flight Nurse. At that time VA was the only care available to me because my husband, a self-employed Veteran, had no health coverage and the health plan provided by my employer would not cover the cost of care associated with injuries incurred in the line of military duty.

I became an advocate because I saw firsthand how hard it was for many Veterans at the time to navigate a system they did not fully understand. Even though I was quite ill, the nurse in me knew there were better methods and avenues for health care which could, and should, have been implemented. Because my injuries were so severe, I was not able to continue practicing "hands-on" bedside nursing. This was very difficult to accept and seemed to be the end of my professional life. However, I was referred to the VA Vocational Rehabilitation Program which gave me a great deal of support as I pursued a Doctorate in Public Health at the Yale School of Medicine in New Haven, Connecticut. During my studies, I acquired new skills and tools

to understand health care systems. Statistical data and research was a very important component to both my course of study and my advocacy. We often hear the mantra “speak truth to power” but I learned that words are empty if you don’t have the facts to back them up. Thus my advocacy for Veterans has been both my vocation and my scholarly pursuit.

I understand well the vital mission that the VA’s Office for Policy and Planning (OPP) has in developing strategic plans; coordinating strategic resource allocation; producing verifiable data and predictive models; integrating business processes and programs; and delivering unbiased program analyses and evaluations to provide the reliable information needed to make informed decisions on VA programs and services. I am a firm believer in accountability: accountability to Veterans, accountability to Congress and accountability to the American people. As a researcher, I am a seeker of truth. I use data, science and evidence-based research to guide my thinking and conclusions. However, I believe that this information must also be tempered with the realities of providing services to Veterans that are consistent with delivery systems available in the 21st century. For VA to accomplish its core mission of serving our Veterans, it is imperative that accountability, quality, and effectiveness continue to be a priority at every service level. Housed within OPP are several “business lines” which are tasked with analysis and evaluation. I welcome the opportunity to review the activities of these offices to continue to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of VA’s services and programs.

The needs of today’s Veterans and their families are growing. Just as our military has changed, the needs of our Veterans and their families have changed, and VA is transforming as an organization to meet them. In order to assure that Veterans across this Nation receive the very best VA has to offer, we must continue to challenge the status quo. Today’s Veterans and their families have a vast array of needs and concerns which can range from housing and transportation to childcare and short-term financial and employment issues. We need to build on existing partnerships with Federal and State government agencies, our Veteran Service Organizations, the private-sector, communities, volunteers, and faith-based community. Partnerships are cost-effective and efficient utilization of existing resources is imperative to creating a quality continuum of care for all of America’s Veterans. These partnerships help VA to address issues at the local level where Veterans live and work.

I believe VA’s interagency collaboration with the Department of Defense (DOD) must continue to be a major priority. These relationships are a vital foundation for serving Veterans now and in the future. Congress has authorized benefits and programs which are worthy of the sacrifices Veterans have made to win and sustain the freedoms we all enjoy. The dialog between VA and DOD remains a key element to how the Servicemember will receive those services and benefits. If confirmed, the interface with DOD will be one of my top priorities.

The face of America’s Veteran population is changing dramatically and the expectation for service delivery is no longer based on perceptions, traditions and accepted standards that were applicable 50 years ago. I believe VA can keep pace with the expectations of its consumer base by continuing to create and nurture an atmosphere for new ideas and initiatives that meet the broad range of issues and problems facing Veterans of every generation.

Upon entering his position, Secretary Shinseki set in motion an aggressive and ambitious transformation of VA. I am honored to be asked to assist in this continued effort of change to ensure Veterans now and in the future receive the respect, care and assistance they have earned and deserve. Veterans are in every town and city in this Nation; these are our friends, family members, and neighbors. Addressing the needs of Veterans is greatly influenced by where they live, economic conditions, access to transportation, and the care available in their immediate location.

For the past 40 years, I have devoted my life and profession to caring for others as a practicing nurse, researcher and as an advocate for Veterans. “Keeping faith” with the men and women who have served and are serving in the military has been the fundamental and overriding purpose of my work and a “guide star” for my life journey. These experiences will be a positive addition to VA’s leadership team. As one who remembers the evolution from the Veterans Administration to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, I see that this is an opportune time to effect meaningful change. Challenging the status quo and assuring a continuum of services that are worthy of the Veterans we serve are what I intend to impact through leadership, collaboration and a team approach.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

RESPONSE TO PREHEARING QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. BERNARD SANDERS TO  
LINDA S. SCHWARTZ TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR POLICY AND PLANNING, U.S.  
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

*Question 1.* For what reason do you seek this position?

Response. I have used VA health care and benefits programs since I was medically retired from the military in 1986 after sustaining injuries in an aircraft accident while serving as an Air Force Flight Nurse. At that time VA was the only care available to me because my husband, a self-employed Veteran, had no health coverage and the health plan provided by my employer would not cover the cost of care associated with injuries incurred in the line of military duty. I became an advocate for Veterans because I saw firsthand how difficult it was for many of my fellow Veterans to navigate a system they did not fully understand. As one who remembers the evolution from the Veterans Administration to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, I see that this is an opportune time to continue to effect meaningful changes. I have devoted my life to healing the wounds of war. Thus, I am deeply honored and energized by the opportunity to bring my experience, education and passion to a National level in the hope I will positively effect changes that will improve services and programs for America's Veterans and their families.

*Question 2.* Please describe your management style and decisionmaking process.

Response. There are many facets to my management style. Some say I am very "hands on." If this means I take my responsibilities very seriously, that I do not make a decision until I have the information I need to address the issue and that I check facts presented to me, then I am "hands on." Some say that I am a "consensus builder." I do take into consideration the experience and expertise of my staff and advisors; however their involvement in decisions is also tempered by the fact that I retain the right to make the final decision if I am ultimately accountable for the end result. I am pragmatic enough to realize that there are times when decisions have to be evaluated in the light of new factors, realities, information or circumstances. I am not afraid to change a strategy or decision if it improves the quality or success of the initiative. As a researcher, I am also a seeker of truth. I am one who uses data, science and evidence-based research to guide my thinking and conclusions. I also believe a good manager works with staff to identify individual strengths and I strive to incorporate these qualities to enhance the collective efforts of my management team.

*Question 3.* If we were to ask your prior subordinates about your management style, what would they say?

Response. Those who have worked for me or with me would characterize my management style as creative but pragmatic. I look for solutions and often solicit the input of all my managers, even if they are not vested in the outcome. My process often begins with: "How can we make this happen?" or "How can we achieve our goal?" rather than dismiss a problem or a situation as insurmountable. I do challenge the status quo and encourage my staff to do the same. I use a team approach and pay close attention to the input of my staff especially if they will be directly involved with carrying out the decisions made. Most would say I am open to their suggestions even if they have a concern with a plan or strategy. I think of myself as a problem solver who uses data and information to focus on a task or goal. At the same time I am acutely aware of existing available resources and that decisions, solutions and strategies must be tempered with realities of cost-effectiveness, timeliness and successful outcomes.

*Question 4.* Have you discussed with Secretary Shinseki the duties and the role you would assume as Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning if you are confirmed? If so, what specific areas of the job were discussed?

Response. As Connecticut Commissioner of Veterans' Affairs and President of the National Association of State Directors of Veterans' Affairs, I have had the honor to work with Secretary Shinseki at VA. Secretary Shinseki has made it clear to all of us that he is determined to effect an aggressive and ambitious transformation of the Department. I know that the Office of Policy and Planning plays a pivotal role in this transformation. I share his vision and will do all that I can to assist him and the Department in achieving this goal.

*Question 5.* Have you formulated any thoughts on what your new job responsibilities would be and how you would approach those responsibilities if confirmed?

Response. I understand well the vital mission that VA's Office for Policy and Planning (OPP) has in developing strategies; coordinating resource allocation; producing verifiable data and predictive models; integrating business processes and programs; and delivering unbiased program analyses and evaluations to provide the reliable information needed to make informed decisions on VA programs and services. I am

a firm believer in accountability: accountability to Veterans, accountability to Congress, and accountability to the American people. For VA to accomplish its core mission of serving our Veterans, it is imperative that accountability, quality, and effectiveness continue to be a priority at every service level. Housed within OPP are several “business lines” which are tasked with analysis and evaluation. I welcome the opportunity to support the activities of these offices and continue to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of VA’s services and programs.

*Question 6.* What do you believe are the most significant challenges currently confronting the Department? Which of these challenges will you focus on and how do you intend to address them through your role as Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning? How would you measure your success?

Response. If confirmed, there are many aspects of the position of Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning that offer opportunities for meaningful and sustainable improvements in the lives of America’s Veterans. With the challenges of today’s Veterans, multiple deployments, reliance on the “Citizen Soldiers” of the National Guard and Reserve, I cannot think of a more important time in history to be serving Veterans. For the past 40 years, I have devoted my life and profession to caring for others as a practicing nurse, researcher and as an advocate for Veterans. Keeping faith with the men and women who have served and are serving in the military has been the fundamental and overriding purpose of my work and a “guide star” for my life journey. I am acutely aware that the Veterans returning home now are different than the Veterans of my father’s World War II generation and my own Vietnam generation. While they are not encumbered with validating the legitimacy of Post-Traumatic Stress, they have brought the issue of Traumatic Brain Injury and its consequences to the forefront. The needs of today’s Veterans and their families are growing and changing. Just as our military has changed, the needs of our Veterans and their families have changed. Secretary Shinseki and his leadership team have made great strides to ensure assure VA is making adjustments and remains on course to identify and address these demands. In order to ensure that Veterans across this Nation receive the very best VA has to offer, we must continue to challenge the status quo. Today’s Veterans and their families have a vast array of needs and concerns that can range from housing and transportation to childcare and short-term financial and employment issues. I hope that VA will continue to build on existing partnerships with Federal and State government agencies, Veteran Service

Organizations, the private-sector, communities, volunteers, and the faith-based community. I would also like VA to explore the development of stronger, creative and more diverse partnerships with State Governments, which have systems and infrastructures that can enhance and enrich America’s capacity to care for Veterans. Partnerships at the local level with oversight are cost-effective, efficient and effective approaches for augmenting existing VA resources to create a quality continuum of care to address issues at the grassroots level where Veterans live and work.

*Question 7.* If confirmed, how would you oversee certain management activities and processes that require coordination across the Department?

Response. If confirmed, I look forward to working with my counterparts within VA to support the strategy outlined by Secretary Shinseki and VA’s core mission of serving America’s Veterans. I am a firm believer in collaboration and coordination of resources and personnel to create a continuum of programs and services that are easily accessible and will meet the needs of Veterans. At the hub of this activity is the interaction and communication between policymakers, implementers, service delivery personnel and ultimately and most importantly, the Veteran. At the same time, the efficiency of any process must also be evaluated and refined. VA, although a large system, has a core mission of caring for Veterans which can and should transcend bureaucratic barriers, roadblocks or indifference. Support for the core mission and accountability for achieving the goals this work requires, must be an integral part of the individual and collective efforts of all tasked with management activities, services and programs.

*Question 8.* What do think your role will be in VA budget formulation?

Response. While responsibility for VA budget formulation resides with VA’s Office of Management, the Office of Policy and Planning makes an important contribution to this process by developing the Department’s strategic plan. OPP is also responsible for the multi-year programming effort that will help make sure that the budget request is aligned with the priorities identified in the strategic plan. OPP makes other important contributions to the budget development process through oversight and evaluation of existing programs. Additionally, OPP contributes to budget deliberations by creating and maintaining VA’s Veteran population models and through its actuarial analysis capabilities, OPP provides necessary data required to make ac-



curate cost and workload projections. If confirmed, I will work to make sure that OPP is providing the best available data and evaluations for consideration for the budget formulation process for the entire department.

*Question 9.* There has been significant effort to improve the level of collaboration and cooperation between VA and DOD. What do you believe would be your role in dealing with areas of concern involving the two Departments? What recommendations do you have for improving the level of collaboration and cooperation between the Departments?

Response. I believe VA's interagency collaboration with the Department of Defense (DOD) must continue to be a major priority and the Office of Policy and Planning has responsibility for overseeing that relationship for the Secretary. I have served over 10 years as Commissioner of Connecticut's Department of Veterans' Affairs. The seamless transition promised to our troops returning today has improved in those years but the process needs more work to avoid unnecessary red tape, delays in service and ambiguities that can block services from being delivered. The relationship between DOD and VA remains a key element on how the military member and Veteran will receive those services and benefits. This relationship is a vital foundation for serving Veterans now and in the future. If confirmed, the interface with DOD will be one of my top priorities.

*Question 10.* There has been significant effort to transform VA into a high-performing 21st century organization. What do you see as the greatest challenges in this transformation and how can the Office of Policy and Planning assist VA in completing this transformation?

Response. The face of America's Veteran population is changing dramatically and the expectations for service delivery are no longer based on perceptions, traditions and accepted standards that were applicable 50 years ago. VA must keep pace with the expectations of its consumer base and the American public's desire to care for Veterans. Life in the 21st century presents challenges of timeliness, accessibility and response time that in the past have not been standards for VA operations. While Secretary Shinseki and all of VA has begun this transformation, there is need to continue this journey of change to assure Veterans now and in the future receive the respect, care and assistance they have earned and deserve. Anticipating needs, identifying trends, using data to forecast utilization of resources and evaluation of existing programs are within the purview of the Office of Policy and Planning; if confirmed I will use these tools to assist and inform the decisionmaking process at VA.

*Question 11.* More specifically, VA has undertaken a significant effort to transform its compensation claims system. In testimony before the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs on March 13, 2013, GAO noted in its testimony (GAO-13-453T) that VA's claims transformation efforts need to be "driven by a robust, comprehensive plan." The testimony then went on to describe a review of documents in GAO's work that failed to meet criteria for sound planning. Since GAO's review, VA has published a written strategic plan titled "Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Strategic Plan to Eliminate the Compensation Claims Backlog, January 25, 2013." Would you consider this the robust, comprehensive plan necessary to drive VA's compensation claims system transformation efforts? Are the strategic benchmarks set forth by VA illustrative of feasible and sound goals that can be adequately measured?

Response. As Commissioner of Veterans' Affairs for the State of Connecticut and a Veteran who has used VA services for many years, I can say that the responsiveness of VA to the claims backlog is by far the best it has ever been. For a system that began over 60 years ago, the acknowledgement that the process is too long was a major milestone. President Obama, Secretary Shinseki and Congress have been at the forefront of addressing a problem that has existed in this agency for decades. In the past two years more attention, innovation, evaluation and retooling has been invested in the timeliness and accuracy of claims processing than has ever been dedicated to this vital program in the past. For the first time in history there are "goals" for the processing of these claims. There is no doubt that the efforts have been robust and comprehensive. However, I will look for ways to continue to strengthen the process. In particular, I look forward to working with State and County VSOs and Veterans on this subject. State and County Veteran Service Officers as well as the cadre of Service Officers affiliated with the Congressionally Chartered Veteran Service Organizations are the backbone of this process. From the local level, I have been impressed with Under Secretary Hickey's engagement of the Veteran Service Officer community, responsiveness to suggestions and implementation of corrective actions to improve this process. I look forward to working with the VA

leadership to support the progress that has been made and address the challenges that remain to assure that the claims process is timely, appropriate and effective.

*Question 12.* In your experience what steps can a large department take in order to be prepared to respond to unforeseen developments during a large scale transformation?

Response. Transition, change and innovation, especially in an agency as large as VA, requires oversight, evaluation and assessment of outcomes that are unbiased and frequent. One of the most difficult challenges is cultivating a staff dedicated to the success of the transformation. Key to this success is communication and an open, honest and non-judgmental dialog with staff and stakeholders to assure that “unforeseen developments” are identified early and corrective actions are initiated immediately. Additionally, familiarity with the system and available resources that can be brought to bear to address the unforeseen developments will greatly enhance the response time and streamline the adjustments that may need to be made. Leadership can determine the objectives and strategy, however implementing the changes and the success of the transformation process hinges on those tasked with actually incorporating and sustaining meaningful changes.

*Question 13.* How can the Office of Policy and Planning better support continual enhancement of policies, programs, benefits and services to Veterans?

Response. I am aware that the Office of Policy and Planning has many tools and assigned duties that can support and improve the spectrum of programs and services VA provides to Veterans and their families. Data collection, trend analysis, oversight and evaluation are all valuable resources that can enhance and enrich the capacity of VA leadership to make quality informed decisions. Statistical data analysis and research has always been an integral part of my studies and advocacy. I am one who believes that “speaking truth to power” also creates an inherent responsibility to have solid information and data to support a premise for change. However, I am also mindful that VA needs be responsive to the expectations of life in the 21st century and must also look to the private sector for concepts, innovations and consultation that will help keep VA better serve Veterans now and in the future.

*Question 14.* Do you agree to appear before the Committee at such times and concerning such matters as the Committee might request for so long as you serve in the position for which you now seek confirmation?

Response. I look forward to working closely with the Committee and appearing before the Committee to discuss matters that are important to our Veterans.

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[The Committee questionnaire for Presidential nominees follows:]

## PART I: ALL OF THE INFORMATION IN THIS PART WILL BE MADE PUBLIC

**Basic Biographical Information**

Please provide the following information.

<i>Position to Which You Have Been Nominated</i>	
<u>Name of Position</u>	<u>Date of Nomination</u>
Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Policy and Planning	August 1, 2013

<i>Current Legal Name</i>			
<u>First Name</u>	<u>Middle Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Suffix</u>
Linda	Spoonster	Schwartz	

<i>Addresses</i>					
<u>Residential Address</u> (do not include street address)			<u>Office Address</u> (include street address)		
			Street: 287 West Street		
<u>City:</u> Pawcatuck	<u>State:</u> CT.	<u>Zip:</u> 06379	<u>City:</u> Rocky Hill	<u>State:</u> CT	<u>Zip:</u> 06057

<i>Other Names Used</i>						
<u>First Name</u>	<u>Middle Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Suffix</u>	<small>Check if Maiden Name</small>	<u>Name Used From</u> (Month/Year) (Check box if estimate)	<u>Name Used To</u> (Month/Year) (Check box if estimate)
Linda	Annette	Spoonster		X	7/1944 <input type="checkbox"/> Est	3/1974 <input type="checkbox"/> Est

<i>Birth Year and Place</i>	
<u>Year of Birth</u> (Do not include month and day)	<u>Place of Birth</u>
1944	Wadsworth, Ohio

<i>Marital Status</i>					
Check All That Describe Your Current Situation:					
Never Married	Married	Separated	Annulled	Divorced	Widowed
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<i>Spouse's Name (current spouse only)</i>			
<u>Spouse's First Name</u>	<u>Spouse's Middle Name</u>	<u>Spouse's Last Name</u>	<u>Spouse's Suffix</u>
Stanley		Schwartz	

<i>Spouse's Other Names Used (current spouse only)</i>						
<u>First Name</u>	<u>Middle Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Suffix</u>	<small>Check if Maiden Name</small>	<u>Name Used From</u> (Month/Year) (Check box if estimate)	<u>Name Used To</u> (Month/Year) (Check box if estimate)
					Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/>
					Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/>

<i>Children's Names (if over 18)</i>			
<u>First Name</u>	<u>Middle Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Suffix</u>
Lorraine	Catherine	Schwartz	

**2. Education**

List all post-secondary schools attended.

<u>Name of School</u>	<u>Type of School</u> (vocational/technical/trade school, college/university/military college, correspondence/distance/extension/online school)	<u>Date Began School</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate)	<u>Date Ended School</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate) (check "present" box if still in school)	<u>Degree</u>	<u>Date Awarded</u>
Yale	University School of Medicine	9/87 Est <input type="checkbox"/> X	5/98 Est <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/>	DrPH	1998
Yale	University School of Nursing	9/82 Est <input type="checkbox"/>	5/84 Est <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/>	MSN	1984
Univ. MD	University of Maryland	2/69 Est <input type="checkbox"/>	5/78 Est <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/>	BS	1978
St. Thomas	Hospital School of Nursing Akron, Ohio	9/62 Est <input type="checkbox"/>	8/66 Est <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/>	Diploma in Nursing	1966

• **Employment**

(A) List all of your employment activities, including unemployment and self-employment. If the employment activity was military duty, list separate employment activity periods to show each change of military duty station. Do not list employment before your 18th birthday unless to provide a minimum of two years of employment history.

<u>Type of Employment</u> (Active Military Duty Station, National Guard/Reserve, USPHS Commissioned Corps, Other federal employment, State Government (Non-federal Employment), Self-employment, Unemployment, Federal Contractor, Non-Government Employment (excluding self-employment), Other)	<u>Name of Your Employer/Assigned Duty Station</u>	<u>Most Recent Position Title/Rank</u>	<u>Location</u> (City and State only)	<u>Date Employment Began</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate)	<u>Date Employment Ended</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate) (check "present" box if still employed)
State Government	State of Connecticut	Commissioner Department of Veteran Affairs	Rocky Hill, CT	Est <input type="checkbox"/> 5/03	Est <input type="checkbox"/> Present
Non-Government	Yale University School of Nursing	Associate Clinical Professor of Nursing	New Haven, CT	Est <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 9/04	Est <input type="checkbox"/> Present
Non-Government	Yale University School of Nursing	Research Scientist/Scholar	New Haven, CT	Est <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 10/99	Est <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5/04

Non-Government	Project Partnership Inc.	President (unpaid position) 501©(3) organization providing jobs and housing for needy veterans.	New Haven, CT	Est 4/94	Est 2003
Other	Yale University School of Medicine	Full Time Doctoral Student	New Haven, CT	Est 7/1987	Est 5/98
State Government	State of Connecticut	Mohegan Community College Adjunct Professor/Lecturer Director of Continuing Education for Nurses	Norwich, CT	9/80 Est	5/93 Est □X
State Government	State of Connecticut	Central Connecticut State University Clinical Professor Public Health Nursing	New Britain, CT	Spring 1992 Est □X	Spring 1992
State Government	State of Connecticut	University of Connecticut Lecturer in Nursing	Storrs, CT	Fall 1989	Fall 1989
Non-Government	United Community Services	Supervisor Psychiatric Public Health Division	Norwich, CT	Est 9/85	Est 8/87
Federal Government	United States Air Force Active Reserve	Major Flight Nurse Flight Nurse Instructor Flight Clinical Coordinator 69 <sup>th</sup> Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron	McGuire AFB, NJ	Est 4/80	Est 11/86
Non-Government	American Red Cross	Caseworker Office of the Field Director	Rhein Main AB Germany	Est 10/79	Est 3/80
Other	American Red Cross	Volunteer Chair Nursing and Health Programs European Division Founder Women's Advocacy Program	Rhein Main AB, Germany	Est 9/77	Est 4/80
Other	University of Maryland	Student	Rhein Main Germany	Est 9/76	Est 5/78
Federal Government	United States Air Force	Flight Nurse Instructor Flight Clinical Coordinator 2 <sup>nd</sup> Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron	Rhein Main AFB, Germany	Est 7/72	Est 3/76
Federal Government	United States Air Force	Staff Nurse/Educational Coordinator	Plattsburgh AFB, NY	1/71	7/72
Federal Government	United States Air Force	Staff Nurse	Tachikawa AB, Japan	1/69	7/71

Federal Government	United States Air Force	Staff Nurse	Amarillo AFB, Texas	4/68	12/68
Non-Government	Saint Thomas Hospital	Staff Nurse	Akron, OH	Est 8/66	Est 3/68

(B) List any advisory, consultative, honorary or other part-time service or positions with federal, state, or local governments, not listed elsewhere.

Name of Government Entity	Name of Position	Date Service Began (month/year) (check box if estimate)		Date Service Ended (month/year) (check box if estimate) (check "present" box if still serving)	
		Est	<input type="checkbox"/>	Est	Present <input type="checkbox"/>
Department of Veteran Affairs	Chair/Member VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans	7/95	<input type="checkbox"/>	7/00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Department of Veteran Affairs	Vice-Chair/Member VA Advisory Committee on Readjustment of Combat Veterans	6/90	<input type="checkbox"/>	6/97	<input type="checkbox"/>
Department of Veteran Affairs	Member Advisory Committee on Seriously Mentally Ill Veteran Treatment	9/94	<input type="checkbox"/>	12/03	<input type="checkbox"/>
Department of Veteran Affairs	Member VA Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans	4/92	Est	9/95	Est

• **Honors and Awards**

List all scholarships, fellowships, honorary degrees, civilian service citations, military medals, academic or professional honors, honorary society memberships and any other special recognition for outstanding service or achievement.

**AWARDS AND RECOGNITION**

- 2013 PUBLIC SERVICE HONOR ROLL, Yale School of Public Health Alumnae
- 2013 EXCEPTIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS IN NURSING, Yale School of Nursing Alumnae
- 2013 HONORARY LIFE MEMBER, Jewish War Veterans of the United States
- 2013 NIGHTINGALE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN NURSING, Southeastern Connecticut Public Health Association
- 2013 MOTHER MARY CLAVEN LEADERSHIP AWARD Laurelton Hall Board of Trustees
- 2012 MARINE CORPS OFFICERS SWORD, Marine Corps League of Connecticut
- 2012 2012 NATIONAL INNOVATIONS AWARD, Council of State Governments 2012
- 2012 INSPIRING WOMAN - Mohegan Sun's 1<sup>st</sup> Inspiring Women Award
- 2011 DANIEL BISSELL AWARD Military Order of the Purple Heart, Connecticut

- 2009 MILITARY LEGACY AWARD Hispanic American Veterans of Connecticut
- 2009 RECOGNITION FOR OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP AND CONTRIBUTIONS to “A New Century of Women in Healthcare”, Connecticut Women’s Hall of Fame.
- 2009 ARCHON AWARD “First to Lead” Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing Award for exceptional leadership in International relations and research of the human effects of exposure to Agent Orange”
- 2008 CITATION FOR DEDICATED LEADERSHIP, Catholic War Veterans of America
- 2007 “DANDO FRENTE HOY Y SIEMPRE”, Hispanic American Veterans of Connecticut
- 2007 OUTSTANDING MEMBER OF THE YEAR, Disabled Veterans of America, Department of Connecticut
- 2006 COLONEL, Connecticut Governor’s Military Staff
- 2006 PRO PATRIA AWARD, Department of Defense
- 2006 DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD, Military Order of the Purple Heart
- 2005 VETERAN SMALL BUSINESS CHAMPION OF THE YEAR, Small Business Administration
- 2005 FLORENCE S. WALD AWARD for Excellence in Nursing Practice, Connecticut Nurses
- 2004 BRONZE MEDALLION, Chapel of the Four Chaplains Inc. Cape May, NJ
- 2004 MERITORIUS ALUMNI AWARD, Wadsworth, High School, Wadsworth, Ohio
- 2004 STATE OF OHIO VETERANS’ HALL OF FAME, Governor of Ohio
- 2003 “SPIRIT of VOLUNTEERISM AWARD” Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, Department of Defense
- 2002 PRESIDENT’S AWARD, Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America
- 2002 DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD, Connecticut Secretary of State
- 2001 FELLOW OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF NURSING, Washington, DC
- 2001 BLOOMER AWARD, Hartford Courant Northeast Magazine
- 2000 HUMANITARIAN AWARD, Chapel of the Four Chaplains Inc. Cape May, NJ.
- 1999 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNA AWARD, Yale University School of Nursing
- 1997 EXCEPTIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARD, Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.



- 1996 COMMUNITY HERO OLYMPIC TORCHBEARER, Olympic Torch Relay Atlanta Olympic Games Committee
- 1995 VETERAN COMMENDATION MEDAL, Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs
- 1993 OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO VETERANS, Connecticut State Council Vietnam Veterans
- 1992 VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA, NATIONAL COMMENDATION MEDAL, Vietnam Veterans of America
- 1992 VETERAN OF THE YEAR, Norwich Connecticut Veterans Council
- 1992 CITATION, "For Service to Connecticut's Veterans", Connecticut General Assembly
- 1990 OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO WOMEN VETERANS, William Joiner Center, University of Massachusetts, Boston.
- 1989 WHO'S WHO IN AMERICAN NURSING
- 1987 OUTSTANDING WOMEN IN CONNECTICUT
- 1987 CITATION Governor Wm. O'Neil and the United Nations Association
- 1986 GOD AND COUNTRY AWARD, Connecticut Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars
- 1985 CITATION, Connecticut General Assembly
- 1983 OUTSTANDING YOUNG WOMEN IN AMERICA
- 1979 SERVICE AWARD, "For Service during the Evacuation Iran", American Red Cross
- 1979 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR, American Red Cross, Rhein Main Military Community

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• Memberships

List all memberships that you have held in professional, social, business, fraternal, scholarly, civic, or charitable organizations in the last ten years.

Unless relevant to your nomination, you do NOT need to include memberships in charitable organizations available to the public as a result of a tax deductible donation of \$1,000 or less, Parent-Teacher Associations or other organizations connected to schools attended by your children, athletic clubs or teams, automobile support organizations (such as AAA), discounts clubs (such as Groupon or Sam's Club), or affinity memberships/consumer clubs (such as frequent flyer memberships).

<u>Name of Organization</u>	<u>Dates of Your Membership</u> (You may approximate)	<u>Position(s) Held</u>
Military Mind Body Health Consortium Advisory Board	2012- Present	Member Advisory Board
Business and Professional Women's Foundation	2010- Present	Joining Forces Advisory Council
Connecticut Veterans Memorial	2007- Present	President
National Coalition of Homeless Veterans	2003- Present	Member
National Association of State Directors of Veteran Affairs	2003- Present	Northeast Region Vice-President (2011-2013)/President 2010-2011/ Senior-Vice President 2009-2010/ Junior -Vice President (2008-2009) /Secretary (2004-2006)
American Academy of Nursing	2001 - Present	Member/Member of Expert Panel on Military/Veteran Health (since 2011)
Society of Air Force Nurses	1986 - Present	Member
Sigma Theta Tau Nursing Society	1984 - Present	Member
Vietnam Veterans of America	1985 - Present	Life Member
Vietnam Veterans of America	1985 - 2003	Regional Director/Board of Directors/Chair of Health Care Committee
Disabled American Veterans	1983 - Present	Life Member
American Nurses Association	1966 - Present	Board of Directors(1987-1989)/Treasurer of the PAC (1989)

**Political Activity**

(A) Have you ever been a candidate for or been elected or appointed to a political office?

<u>Name of Office</u>	<u>Elected/Appointed/ Candidate Only</u>	<u>Year(s) Election Held or Appointment Made</u>	<u>Term of Service</u> (if applicable)

**(B) List any offices held in or services rendered to a political party or election committee during the last ten years that you have not listed elsewhere. N/A**

<u>Name of Party/Election Committee</u>	<u>Office/Services Rendered</u>	<u>Responsibilities</u>	<u>Dates of Service</u>

**(C) Itemize all individual political contributions of \$200 or more that you have made in the past five years to any individual, campaign organization, political party, political action committee, or similar entity. Please list each individual contribution and not the total amount contributed to the person or entity during the year.**

<u>Name of Recipient</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Year of Contribution</u>
Rosa DeLauro (Congress)	500	2/2013
Tammy Duckworth for Congress	1,000	10/2012
Rosa DeLauro	250	3/2012
Tammy Duckworth for Congress	500	3/2013
Tammy Duckworth for Congress	500	9/2011
ACTBLU	1,000	7/2010
Rosa DeLauro for Congress	1,000	7/2010
Chris Shays for Senate	250	10/2008
Obama for President	500	10/2008
American Nurses Association PAC	250	9/2008
Hillary Clinton for President	500	4/2008
Hillary Clinton for President	500	2/2008

• **Publications**

**List the titles, publishers and dates of books, articles, reports or other published materials that you have written, including articles published on the Internet.**

- 2013 Collins, E., Wilmoth, M., Schwartz, L., "Have you Ever Served in the Military?"  
Nursing Outlook, Official Journal of the American Academy of Nursing, (Sept/Oct.)
- 2009 The 12th Annual Force Health Protection Conference, Albuquerque, New Mexico, US  
Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine and Force Health  
Protection and Readiness – Speaker "Community Partnerships Serving Returning  
Veterans" (Selected by DOD for training for world-wide distribution)
- 2008 Schwartz L, "Forging a System of Support for "Citizen Soldiers" in the 21st Century"  
White Paper on Status of Veteran Programs and Services

- 2008 Schwartz, L. "Considerations for Change in Veterans Affairs" in Inside the Minds: The Changing Landscape of Veterans Affairs. Aspatore Books, Boston, MA
- 2003 Knafl, G., Schwartz, L., "Birth Defects in Vietnam Veterans" Published in the Proceedings of 23<sup>rd</sup> Symposium on Halogenated Environmental Organic Pollutants, Dioxin '03 Boston
- 2001 Schwartz, L. "Biochemical Lessons Learned from Past Wars: Health Problems of US Military Women Exposed to Agent Orange in Vietnam" Advancing Nursing Practice Excellence: State of the Science American Association of Colleges of Nursing (Sept.).
- 2002 Schwartz, L. "Health Problems of US Military Women Who Served in Vietnam" Proceedings of International Scientific Conference on Human Health and Environmental Effects of Agent Orange/Dioxins, Hanoi, Vietnam.
- 1998 Schwartz, L. "Health problems of American women veterans of the Vietnam War" Human Exposure Epidemiology: Risk Assessment and Management, 18th Symposium on Halogenated Environmental Organic Pollutants, Dioxin '98 Stockholm Sweden
- 1997 Fontana, A., Schwartz, L., Rosenheck, R., "Posttraumatic Stress disorder among female Vietnam veterans: A causal model of etiology", American Journal of Public Health, Vol. 87, No 2.
- 1995 Schwartz, L., "Women in the military -> women veterans", National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Clinical Quarterly, US Department of Veterans Affairs, Palo Alto, CA
- 1993 Schwartz, L., "Women serving in the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam war", Proceedings Committee to Review the Health Effects in Vietnam Veterans of Exposure to Herbicides, National Academy of Science, Institute of Medicine, Washington, DC.
- 1992 Schwartz, L., "Our unknown veterans emerge from the shadows", Yale Medicine (Summer)
- 1991 Schwartz, L. "Images at the Wall" in Van Devanter, L & Furey, J.A. Visions of War Dreams of Peace. Warner Books, NY.
- 1990 Schwartz, L., "One year and seven months later: What the National Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Study means to you", The Veteran National Publication of Vietnam Veterans of America Inc., July - August.
- 1990 Schwartz, L., "Profiles in Courage", The Maine Nurse, Maine State Nurses Association, Augusta, Maine Winter Edition

- 1990 Schwartz, L., "Readjustment Problems of Women Veterans in Today's Society", Proceedings National Training Conference on Women Veterans, US Department of Labor, Denver, Colorado
- 1990 Schwartz, L., "From the drawing board to the cutting edge", The Prairie Spring Rose, North Dakota State Nurses Association, Minot, North Dakota.
- 1990 Schwartz, L., "Readjustment Problems of Women Veterans in Today's Society", Proceedings National Training Conference on Women Veterans, US Department of Labor, Denver, Colorado
- 1988 Schwartz, L., "Women and the Vietnam Experience", Image the Journal of Nursing Scholarship, Winter Edition
- 1987 Schwartz, L., "Nurses Notes: The day I most felt like a nurse", Image the Journal of Nursing Scholarship, Winter Edition
- 1986 Schwartz, L., "Dynamics of a Legacy", Ohio Nurses Review, Ohio State Nurses Association,
- 1985 Schwartz, L., "Quality of Life in Patients with Lethal Cardiac Arrhythmia", Sigma Theta Tau Research Day, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT.
- 1984 Schwartz, L., "Survivors of Lethal Cardiac Arrhythmia: Experience and Aftermath", Masters Thesis Yale School of Nursing New Haven, CT.
- 1980 Schwartz, L., "Nursing Management of Traumatic Orthopedic Injuries in a Field Situation", of Military Surgeons Annual Meeting, Washington, DC.
- 1974 Spoonster Schwartz, L., "Master Question File as an Aid to Aircrew Proficiency", Proceedings 1974 Annual Meeting, Aerospace Medical Society, Washington, DC.

### **Public Statements**

- (A) List any testimony, official statements or other communications relating to matters of public policy that you have issued or provided or that others presented on your behalf to public bodies or officials.

### **US CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY**

Honoring the Commitment, Overcoming Barriers to Quality Mental Health Care for Veterans, House Veteran Affairs Committee 113<sup>th</sup> Congress February 2013

National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs: Legislative Priorities, Senate and House Joint Committee on Veteran Affairs 112<sup>th</sup> Congress March 2011

Mental Health Treatment for Families: Supporting Those Who Support Our Veterans, House Veterans Affairs Committee 110<sup>th</sup> Congress 2<sup>nd</sup> Session 2008

Perspectives on the Quality of Care Veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan, Presidential Commission on Care for Returning Wounded Warriors June 2008

State Veterans' Home Nurse Recruitment and Retention, House Veterans Affairs Committee 108<sup>th</sup> Congress 2<sup>nd</sup> Session 2004

Capacity of US Department of Veterans Affairs to Provide Health Care to America's Veterans, House Veterans Affairs Committee 108<sup>th</sup> Congress 1<sup>st</sup> Session 2003

Services to Women Veterans House Veterans Affairs Committee 107<sup>th</sup> Congress 2<sup>nd</sup> Session 2002

Military Exposures: The Continuing Challenges of Care and Compensation before Senate Veterans Committee 107<sup>th</sup> Congress 2<sup>nd</sup> Session 2002

The V A's Emergency Preparedness Posture and Related Issues: House Veterans' Affairs Committee 107<sup>th</sup> Congress 1<sup>st</sup> Session 2001

Mental Health, Substance-Use Disorders and Homeless Programs: House Veterans Affairs Committee on Health 107<sup>th</sup> Congress 1<sup>st</sup> Session 2001

Actions Needed to Improve Communications of Air Force Ranch Hand Study and Data: Committee on National Security, House Veterans Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, 106<sup>th</sup> Congress 2<sup>nd</sup> Session 2000

Birth Defects in the Children of Women Veterans Who Served in Vietnam: Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs 106<sup>th</sup> Congress 2<sup>nd</sup> Session 2000

Clarification and Enhancement of Authorities Relating to the Processing of Claims for Veterans: Committee on Veterans Affairs, US Senate 106<sup>th</sup> Congress 2<sup>nd</sup> Session 2000

1998 Report to Congress by VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans: Committee on Veterans' Affairs, House of Representatives 106<sup>th</sup> Congress 2<sup>nd</sup> Session 2000

VA Adjudication of Hepatitis C Claims, Special K Award for Mastectomy, Inactive Duty for Training Fairness Act: House Subcommittee on Veterans Benefits of Committee on Veterans' Affairs, 106<sup>th</sup> Congress 2<sup>nd</sup> Session 2000

Impact of Department of Veterans Affairs Health Services Reorganization: Subcommittee on Human Resources of Committee on Government Reform, House of Representatives 105<sup>th</sup> Congress 2<sup>nd</sup> Session 1998

Home Loan Program and Extended Benefits for Members of the Reserve and National Guard: Subcommittee on Benefits of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, House of Representatives 104<sup>th</sup>

Authorization for a Center for Women Veterans within the US Department of Veterans Affairs: Committee on Veterans' Affairs, House of Representatives 104<sup>th</sup> Congress 1<sup>st</sup> Session 1995

Veteran's Perspective on VA Health Care: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, House of Representatives 104<sup>th</sup> Congress 2<sup>nd</sup> Session 1994

Reproductive Hazards and Military Service: Senate Veteran Affairs Committee 104<sup>th</sup> Congress 2<sup>nd</sup> 1994

Community Perspective on Health Care, Economic Opportunity and Social Services Available to Vietnam Veterans: House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, 103<sup>rd</sup> Congress 1<sup>st</sup> Session 1 1993

Status of VA Health Care for Women Veterans: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, House of Representatives 103<sup>rd</sup>

Congress 1<sup>st</sup> Session 1 1993 Women Veterans Health Programs: House Veteran Affairs Committee 102<sup>nd</sup> Congress 2<sup>nd</sup> Session 1992

Status of Health Care to Women Veterans: Senate Veteran Affairs Committee, 102<sup>nd</sup> Congress 1992

Sexual Harassment in the VA workplace and VA Health Care for Women Veterans: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs 102<sup>nd</sup> Congress 2<sup>nd</sup> Session 1 1992

Quality of Services to Veterans by the Department of Veterans Affairs: Committee on Governmental Affairs, US Senate 102<sup>nd</sup> Congress 1<sup>st</sup> Session 1 1991

Status and Concerns of Women Veterans: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, House of Representatives 102<sup>nd</sup> Congress 1<sup>st</sup> Session 1 1991

Retention of Health Care Professionals in VA Health Care System Committee on Veterans' Affairs, House of Representatives 101<sup>st</sup> Congress 2<sup>nd</sup> Session 1 1990

Budgetary Shortfall, Implications for Care of America's Veterans: House Committee on

Veterans' Affairs, 101<sup>st</sup> Congress 1<sup>st</sup> Session 1 1989

Status and Concerns of Vietnam Era Veterans: House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, 101<sup>st</sup> Congress 1<sup>st</sup> 1989 Session 1 1989

Creation of a Memorial to Honor Military Women Who Served in Vietnam: House Subcommittee on Libraries and Monuments of the Committee on Administration, 100<sup>th</sup> Congress 2<sup>nd</sup> Session 1 1988

Status and Concerns of Women Veterans: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, House of Representatives 100<sup>th</sup> Congress 1<sup>st</sup> Session 1 1987

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**(B) List any speeches or talks delivered by you, including commencement speeches, remarks, lectures, panel discussions, conferences, political speeches, and question-and-answer sessions. Include the dates and places where such speeches or talks were given.**

2013 Duke University School of Nursing "Healing the Wounds of War" telecast on C-Span

2012 United Auto Workers – The role of State Governments Serving Veterans

2012 Women in Military Service Remembrance Ceremony

2012 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Military Health Conference, San Antonio, TX – "Role of State Directors of Veteran Affairs"

2012 St. Joseph's College, Hartford, CT – Keynote Speaker at Sigma Theta Tau International Induction Ceremony

2011 National Veterans Fall Business Conference, New Orleans – "State Support for Veteran Owned Businesses"

2011 VA Women Veterans Summit Plenary Session "State Benefits Available to Women Veterans"

2011 Homeless Veterans Supported Employment National Training – Speaker "Community Partners"

2011 National Assoc. of State Women Veterans, Madison, WI – "Perspective on the Progress of VA Women Benefits"



- 2011 Quinnipiac University School of Law – Speaker “Veterans Advocacy and the Legal Community”
- 2011 National Guard Transitional Assistance Advisory Training – Speaker “Continuum of Care for America’s Veterans”
- 2010 International Society for Study of Stress, Montreal, Canada – Speaker “Community Response to the Needs of Returning Veterans”
- 2010 National Alliance on Mental Illness, Boston, MA – Speaker “Best Practices in Mental Health, Prevention and Wellness for Military and their Families”
- 2010 VA National Women’s Veteran Forum – Speaker “Historical Perspective of Women Veterans”
- 2007 Schwartz, L. “Challenges Faced by Veterans in Rural Areas” House of Representatives Veteran Affairs National Conference on Rural Veterans, Washington, DC.
- 2006 Schwartz, L., “Long Term Care” Voices for Action: A Focus on the Changing Needs of America’s Veterans, National Symposium on the Needs of Young Veterans [National Press Club Symposium Report](#)

### **Public Statements**

**(C) List all interviews you have given to newspapers, magazines or other publications, and radio or television stations (including the dates of such interviews)**

#### **2013**

**CT News Junkie | A Bittersweet Stand Down for Outgoing State ... ctnewsjunkie.com Sept 21** Linda Schwartz had the bittersweet task Friday of overseeing what was likely to be her last Veteran Stand Down as state veterans affairs commissioner. The annual ...

**New state law links veterans with support - Norwich, CT - The Bulletin**

[www.norwichbulletin.com/newsnow/x1843591065/New-state-law-links...](http://www.norwichbulletin.com/newsnow/x1843591065/New-state-law-links...) State Department of Veterans Affairs Commissioner Linda Schwartz said ideally, there would be one person in

**90-Year-Old Newington World War II Vet Won't Be Evicted | CT ...**

[cttalking.com/government/90-year-old-newington-world-war-ii-vet...](http://cttalking.com/government/90-year-old-newington-world-war-ii-vet...) Through the work of state Sen. Paul Doyle, D-Wethersfield and Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs Commissioner Linda S. Schwartz,

**News - 2013-05 - Claven awards - Lauralton Hall** [enroll.lauraltonhall.org/Claven-XXIX-awards](http://enroll.lauraltonhall.org/Claven-XXIX-awards) Claven Award recipients honored The 29th Claven Awards ceremony and dinner took place at the Race Brook Country Club in Orange on April 27.

**Whistleblower: VA withheld health studies on soldiers' toxic**  
[www.westhartfordnews.com/articles/2013/03/17/news/doc5141ae28888ca...](http://www.westhartfordnews.com/articles/2013/03/17/news/doc5141ae28888ca...) Connecticut Veterans' Affairs Commissioner Linda Schwartz said the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has long had a problem of conflict

**Congress Probes Mental Health Services at VA - MedPage Today**  
[www.medpagetoday.com/PublicHealthPolicy/MilitaryMedicine/37354](http://www.medpagetoday.com/PublicHealthPolicy/MilitaryMedicine/37354) Feb 13, 2013 ... Linda Schwartz, Dr.PH, Connecticut Commissioner of Veterans Affairs, said the VA can't tackle this issue alone and needs the help.

**Care of Returning Veterans - C-SPAN Video Library Duke University School of Nursing Lecture** [www.c-spanvideo.org/program/CareofR](http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/CareofR) Linda Schwartz talked about the needs and challenges for returning veterans. ... Schwartz, Linda Commissioner Connecticut->Veterans

**Military Suicides Rising in State and Nation; One a Week in**  
[www.countytimes.com/articles/2013/01/29/news/doc510525640ad...](http://www.countytimes.com/articles/2013/01/29/news/doc510525640ad...) It was Veterans Day 2011 and Connecticut Veterans Affairs Commissioner Linda Schwartz was on a float at a welcome-home parade in New

**In Connecticut, veteran suicides on rise-** The Register Citizen  
[registercitizen.com/articles/2013/01/28/news/doc5104b5446692b...](http://registercitizen.com/articles/2013/01/28/news/doc5104b5446692b...) It was Veterans Day 2011 and Connecticut Veterans Affairs Commissioner Linda Schwartz was on a float at a welcome-

**AMERICAN HOMECOMINGS:** Pentagon says active-military ...  
[www.theoaklandpress.com/articles/2013/01/27/news/doc51058834c310f...](http://www.theoaklandpress.com/articles/2013/01/27/news/doc51058834c310f...) It was Veterans Day 2011 and Connecticut Veterans Affairs Commissioner Linda Schwartz was on a float at a welcome-home parade in New

**Connecticut National Guard Feels Pain of Military Suicides**  
[www.countytimes.com/articles/2013/01/27/news/doc510526480137f567890452.txt](http://www.countytimes.com/articles/2013/01/27/news/doc510526480137f567890452.txt) Jan 27, 2013 ... Also see the related stories Military Suicides Rising in State and Nation; One a Week in Connecticut and Connecticut's Veterans Commissioner.

**From Hamburger Hill to VA commissioner: Linda Schwartz aims**  
[nhregister.com/articles/2013/01/27/news/doc5104b...](http://nhregister.com/articles/2013/01/27/news/doc5104b...) ROCKY HILL — Linda Spoonster Schwartz learned all she needed to know about military spirit and unity during the 1969 battle of Hamburger Hill.

**Veterans Commissioner Reflects On End of Combat Ban For Women**  
[www.yourpublicmedia.org/content/wnpr/veterans-commissioner...](http://www.yourpublicmedia.org/content/wnpr/veterans-commissioner...) Veterans Commissioner Reflects On End of Combat Ban For Women. Linda Schwartz is an Air Force veteran.

**Conn., military officials to break ground on new state veterans ...**

[www.therepublic.com/view/story/8bd5f94252ce4d3983931424810fac9c/CT.....](http://www.therepublic.com/view/story/8bd5f94252ce4d3983931424810fac9c/CT.....) Lt. Gov. Nancy Wyman, Veterans Affairs Commissioner Linda Schwartz, National Guard officials and veterans from all five branches of

**Governor Malloy: Gov. Malloy: Hartford Will be Home to First State ...**

[www.governor.ct.gov/malloy/cwp/view.asp?Q=508626&A=4010](http://www.governor.ct.gov/malloy/cwp/view.asp?Q=508626&A=4010) (HARTFORD, CT) – Governor Dannel P. Malloy, joined by Lieutenant Governor Nancy Wyman, Department of Veterans Affairs Commissioner Linda

**Conn. veterans memorial to be located in Hartford | WWLP.com**

[www.wwlp.com/dpp/news/connecticut/conn-veterans-memorial-to-be...](http://www.wwlp.com/dpp/news/connecticut/conn-veterans-memorial-to-be...) State Veterans Affairs Commissioner Linda Schwartz said there are more than 277,000 veterans living in Connecticut but there is no central location

**State official 'optimistic' that huge VA benefits backlog will be ...**

[ctmirror.com/story/19918/state-official-optimistic-huge-va...](http://ctmirror.com/story/19918/state-official-optimistic-huge-va...) Buoyed by a visit from the head of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, state Veteran Affairs Commissioner Linda Schwartz said Friday she is optimistic for the ...

**Conn. broadens veterans' eligibility for rehabilitation | New**

[www.nepsy.com/articles/leading-stories/conn-broadens-veterans-eligibility-f...](http://www.nepsy.com/articles/leading-stories/conn-broadens-veterans-eligibility-f...) Jan 1, 2013... part about this particular legislation,” says Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs Commissioner Linda Schwartz, RN, MSN, DPH, FAAN.

**2012****Women Veterans' Stories of Service: Linda Schwartz - YouTube**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNKMhBWz5mY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNKMhBWz5mY) Click to watch the story of Linda Schwartz, the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Affairs for Connecticut, ...

**SUN: Connecticut Sun Recognize Inspiring Women - WNBA.com**

[www.wnba.com/sun/connecticut\\_sun\\_recognize\\_i\\_2012\\_08\\_14.html](http://www.wnba.com/sun/connecticut_sun_recognize_i_2012_08_14.html) Dr. Linda Spoonster Schwartz ... in the 146-year history of the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs to serve as the State Commissioner of

**Lincoln's famous words now part of Darien veterans cemetery**

[www.darientimes.com/5578/lincolns](http://www.darientimes.com/5578/lincolns) - famous-words-now-part-of-darien-veterans-... Jun 26, 2012 ... The department's commissioner, Linda Schwartz, secured the plaque for Darien, telling The Darien Times the cemetery has great historical ...

**Abe Lincoln, Uncle Sam to remind Darien of July Fourth spirit ...**

[www.dariennewsline.com/local/article/Abe-Lincoln-Uncle-Sam-to-remind-Dari.en](http://www.dariennewsline.com/local/article/Abe-Lincoln-Uncle-Sam-to-remind-Dari.en) Jun 21,

2012 ... Linda Schwartz, commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Veterans' Affairs , said there will be a Civil War

**Dr. Linda Schwartz, A Hero Among Us. | Ann Nyberg's Network**

...networkconnecticut.com/2012/11/dr- Connecticut's Commissioner of Veteran's Affairs is Dr. Linda Schwartz, a caring and compassionate woman who has walked the walk.

**Lt. Governor Wyman: Lt. Governor Wyman, Cmsrs. Rehmer, Schwartz 2012...**

www.ltgovernor.ct.gov/wyman/cwp/view.asp?Q=502544&A=4029 REHMER, SCHWARTZ ANNOUNCE. EXPANSION OF Military Support Program ... Commissioner Patricia Rehmer and Dept. of Veteran's Affairs Commissioner Linda Schwartz to ...

**DeLauro, Mayor Blake Announce New Veterans' Center**

delauro.house.gov/index.php?option=com\_content&view=article&id=718:...MILFORD, CT-- Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (CT-3) joined with Milford Mayor Ben Blake and CT Department of Veterans' Affairs Commissioner Linda Schwartz ...

**Flu outbreak hits Conn. veterans home | Deseret News**

www.deseretnews.com/article/765569114/APNewsBreak-Flu-outbreak...State Veterans' Affairs Commissioner Linda Schwartz tells The Associated Press the veterans were taken to Hartford Hospital on Monday after a

**CT News Junkie 2012 | Annual Stand Down for Veterans Is All About**

www.ctnewsjunkie.com/ctnj.php/archives/entry/annual\_stand\_down\_for... Veterans' Affairs Commissioner Linda Schwartz said this year's event was expected to attract at least 1,000 needy vets, who can receive health screenings, ...

**Conn. broadens veterans' eligibility for rehabilitation | New**

...www.nepsy.com/articles/leading-stories/conn-broadens-veterans,... probably the most attractive part about this particular legislation," says CT. Department of Veterans Affairs Commissioner Linda Schwartz,

**Women Veterans Face Unique Hurdles | @pritheworld - PRI's The**

...www.theworld.org/2012/03/women-veterans-face-unique-hurdles Connecticut's Commissioner of Veterans Affairs, Linda Schwartz, said, ... Schwartz said post-combat problems aren't unique to women, ...

**Veteran has entrepreneurial mission - MyRecordJournal.com ...**

www.myrecordjournal.com/wallingford/article\_8f372752-424f-11e1-b2e..."We know that this is a big problem, especially with the economic crisis," said state Veterans Affairs Commissioner Linda Schwartz.

**American Legion Post 101: NEW! VETERANS ID STATUS ON CT**

...www.somerspost101.org/index.php?id=100 We hope that veterans will see this as a symbol of our pride in them," Department of Veterans Affairs Commissioner Linda Schwartz ... DMV

**The VVA Veteran, a publication of Vietnam Veterans of America vvaveteran.org/32-5/schwartz.htm** Linda Schwartz: A Strong Activist Within The System. ... Commissioner Schwartz is the chief adviser to the Governor on the needs of veterans.

**Veterans | Hartford Magazine** hartfordmag.com/article-680-veterans.html Connecticut Department of Veterans' Affairs Commissioner Linda Schwartz was an Air Force nurse stationed in Tachikawa, Japan, in 1969 when the wounded ...

**Vietnam Veterans to Receive Warm Welcome — at Last - Government**

westhartford.patch.com/.../vietnam-veterans-to-receive-warm-welcome-a...Mar 31, 2012 -- ... you' and the enthusiastic welcome home many of them never received," said Commissioner of Veterans' Affairs Linda Spoonster Schwartz.

**The Ohio Channel | Media www.ohiochannel.org/MediaLibrary/Media.aspx?fileId=138518** Description The Vietnam Veterans Commemoration was held at the Ohio Historical Society in Columbus, Ohio. In this panel discussion, both combat and support veterans describe roles of women during the Vietnam War

**2011****Malloy signs bills aimed at improving veterans' lives (video)-**

www.nhregister.com/articles/2012/11/13/news/new\_haven/doc50a1821be...During a Veterans Day bill signing at Yale Law School, Gov. Dannel P. Malloy ceremoniously ushered in a series of laws intended to improve the lives of veterans .

**Commissioner Of Veterans' Affairs Gets Bipartisan Praise** articles.courant.com/2011-03-05/news/hc-linda-schwartz-0306... ROCKY HILL Linda Schwartz remembers well that first week as commissioner of the Department of Veterans Affairs following her appointment in May 2003.

**PR 3.9.11 Fellow Recognized in Hartford Courant** www.aannet.org/pr-3911-fellow-recognized-in-hartford-courant Mar 9, 2011 – In February, Linda Schwartz was reappointed the Connecticut State Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Washington, DC ...

**Schwartz, Linda | The Connecticut Mirror www.ctmirror.org/politician-archives/11100** Commissioner. Agency/Office: Veterans Affairs. ... Linda Schwartz is one of three holdovers from administration of Gov. M. Jodi Rell who was reappointed in 2010.

**The Day - Linda Schwartz reappointed Veterans Affairs commissioner** www.theday.com/article/ Linda Schwartz has been reappointed to lead the state Department of Veterans' Affairs. Gov.-elect Dan Malloy announced the appointment Monday.

**Meet Linda Schwartz, one of the hold-overs from Gov. Rell -**

[blogs.courant.com/susan\\_campbell/2011/01/meet-linda-schwartz-one...](http://blogs.courant.com/susan_campbell/2011/01/meet-linda-schwartz-one...)Dr. Schwartz, a Vietnam veteran, is Connecticut's Department of Veterans Affairs commissioner, and president of the National Association of State

**VA Commissioner Highlights Programs to Combat Suicide Among ...2011**

[www.yourpublicmedia.org/content/wnpr/va-commissioner-highlights...](http://www.yourpublicmedia.org/content/wnpr/va-commissioner-highlights...) Connecticut VA Commissioner Linda Schwartz. Photo:Photo by Tyler Antrim. A lot of attention has been paid lately to troops coming home from Iraq.

**Department of Veterans Affairs - CT.gov Portal [www.ct.gov/ctva/site/default.asp](http://www.ct.gov/ctva/site/default.asp)**

Commissioner Linda Schwartz asks you to "Make the Call" if help is needed. Department of Veterans' Affairs: 866-928-8387. Coaching into Care: 888-823-7458

**Linda Spoonster Schwartz Remembers Her Father's Experience on D ..DAY**

[content.library.ccsu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/VHP/id/.../1](http://content.library.ccsu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/VHP/id/.../1) Linda Spoonster Schwartz remembers her father's experience on D-Day and the sinking of the Susan B Anthony

**More flu cases confirmed at Conn. veterans home | WTNH.com**

[www.wtnh.com/dpp/news/hartford\\_cty/more-flu-cases-confirmed-at...](http://www.wtnh.com/dpp/news/hartford_cty/more-flu-cases-confirmed-at...)State Veterans Affairs Commissioner Linda Schwartz told The Associated Press on Tuesday that a total of 22 veterans have been sent to area hospitals

**Putting a face with Vietnam war heros | WTNH.com**

[Connecticutwww.wtnh.com/dpp/news/new\\_haven\\_cty/putting-a-face-with-vietnam...](http://Connecticutwww.wtnh.com/dpp/news/new_haven_cty/putting-a-face-with-vietnam...)Connecticut's Veteran's Affairs Commissioner Linda Schwartz who was a nurse in the Air Force during Vietnam knows that being able to see the men and women who ...

**CCSU & CT Veterans' Affairs 'Call for Photos' Kick-Off**

[www.ccsu.edu/page.cfm?p=314&newsid=1318](http://www.ccsu.edu/page.cfm?p=314&newsid=1318) At Connecticut's kickoff event held in CCSU's Founders Hall, President Jack Miller was joined by Commissioner Linda Schwartz, CT Department of Veterans Affairs.

**The Bob Edwards Show, Heather Courtney, Jan Scruggs, and Linda Schwartz**

[www.audible.com](http://www.audible.com) › Radio & TV › Great Interviews ... Linda Schwartz is the commissioner of the Connecticut State Department of Veterans Affairs and is leading the effort in that state to collect photos of all Connecticut veterans who are listed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington.

**Linda Schwartz Praised as Commissioner Of Veterans' Affairs | ...nursing.yale.edu/linda-**

[schwartz-praised-commissioner-veterans-affairs](http://schwartz-praised-commissioner-veterans-affairs) YSN alumna Linda Schwartz RN, MSN '84, DrPH '98, FAAN was featured in the Hartford Courant this week. She was reappointed as Commissioner of Veterans' Affairs.

**CT's Civil War Commemoration well received.** [www.ccsu.edu/page.cfm?p=6563&newsid=1161](http://www.ccsu.edu/page.cfm?p=6563&newsid=1161) Veterans Affairs Commissioner Linda Schwartz recounted how wealthy Darien businessman Benjamin Fitch kept a promise to care for Civil War veterans and their widows and

**President's Message Making a difference in the health care of American Academy of Nursing** [www.nursingconsult.com/nursing/journals\\_Linda\\_Spoonster\\_Schwartz\\_MSN, RN, DrPH, FAAN, retired from the US Air Force after 16 years of service, both in active duty and as a reservist, during the Vietnam War.](http://www.nursingconsult.com/nursing/journals_Linda_Spoonster_Schwartz_MSN,_RN,_DrPH,_FAAN,_retired_from_the_US_Air_Force_after_16_years_of_service,_both_in_active_duty_and_as_a_reserveist,_during_the_Vietnam_War.)

## **2010**

### **Dr. Linda Schwartz, Pawcatuck Resident, Named President**

...[www.theresident.com/2010/10/13/linda-schwartz](http://www.theresident.com/2010/10/13/linda-schwartz) Dr. Linda S. Schwartz, commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Veterans' Affairs, was recently installed as the president of the

### **Meet Dr. Linda Schwartz: The First Woman President of National...**

[www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2010/10/01/meet-dr-linda-schwartz-first](http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2010/10/01/meet-dr-linda-schwartz-first) Dr. Linda S. Schwartz, commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Veterans' Affairs, was recently installed as the president of the National Association

### **Schwartz Named NASDVA President 9-24-10**

[www1.va.gov/WOMENVET/herstory/Schwartz\\_Named...](http://www1.va.gov/WOMENVET/herstory/Schwartz_Named...) • PDF file STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER 287 West Street Rocky Hill, Connecticut 06067 Dr. Linda S. Schwartz...

### **Military veterans -- true heroes -- honored in medal ceremony**

[www.ctpost.com/local/article/Military-veterans-true-heroes-honored...](http://www.ctpost.com/local/article/Military-veterans-true-heroes-honored...) Veteran William Ritchie, of Seymour, receives his Wartime Service Medal from state Commissioner of Veterans Affairs Linda S. Schwartz Thursday May 20, 2010 ...

## **2009**

### **Veterans and Agent Orange Committee to Review the Health Effects in Vietnam Veterans of Exposure to Herbicides** (Seventh Biennial Update), Institute of Medicine - 2009 – Medical

In congressional testimony concerning the GAO report in 2000, Dr. Linda Spoonster Schwartz—a Yale University researcher and retired

**Schwartz, Linda | The Connecticut Mirror** [www.ctmirror.org/node/11100](http://www.ctmirror.org/node/11100) Linda Schwartz Commissioner, Veterans Affairs . Contact: [linda.schwartz@po.state.ct.us](mailto:linda.schwartz@po.state.ct.us) ... Schwartz reported her wages as commissioner

**Linda Schwartz | Connecticut Public Broadcasting Network** [www.cpb.org/profile/linda-schwartz](http://www.cpb.org/profile/linda-schwartz) Linda Schwartz Commissioner State of Connecticut: Department of Veterans' Affairs

**Women In Military Service For America Memorial**

[www.womensmemorial.org/News/CTWomensMemorial.html](http://www.womensmemorial.org/News/CTWomensMemorial.html) Connecticut Veterans Affairs Commissioner Linda Schwartz reports the state has nearly 15,000 women veterans. (July 2009)

**New Research Identifies PTSD, Other Problems for Returning ...**

[www.ccsu.edu/page.cfm?i=2663](http://www.ccsu.edu/page.cfm?i=2663)The report, authorized by Connecticut Governor M. Jodi Rell and DVA Commissioner Linda Spoonster Schwartz, explored the significant medical, ...

**Post Deployment Needs of Recently Returned. Citizen Soldiers: A Community Response.**

[w.pdhealth.mil/education/2009.../Post\\_Deployment\\_Needs](http://w.pdhealth.mil/education/2009.../Post_Deployment_Needs). Linda Spoonster Schwartz RN, MSN, DrPH, FAAN. Commissioner Connecticut Department of Veteran Affairs.

**Linda Spoonster Schwartz Honored by Sigma Theta Tau(2009 | Yale**

[...nursing.yale.edu/linda-spoonster-schwartz-honored-sigma-theta-tau-0](http://...nursing.yale.edu/linda-spoonster-schwartz-honored-sigma-theta-tau-0) Linda Spoonster Schwartz Honored by Sigma Theta Tau; ... an event overseen by Commissioner Schwartz to help needy veterans from all over the state of Connecticut

**LindaSpoonsterSchwartz - STTI Home Page**

[www.nursingsociety.org/.../Pages/LindaSpoonsterSchwartz.aspx](http://www.nursingsociety.org/.../Pages/LindaSpoonsterSchwartz.aspx) Archon Award Recipient Linda Spoonster Schwartz, RN, MSN, DrPH, FAAN Major USAF Retired Commissioner and Commandant Connecticut Department of Veteran Affairs.

**Introduction to the AASA Toolkit: Supporting the Military Child**

[www.aasa.org/uploadedFiles/Resources/Toolkits/Other\\_Toolkits/AASA...](http://www.aasa.org/uploadedFiles/Resources/Toolkits/Other_Toolkits/AASA...) · PDF file  
Introduction to the AASA Toolkit: Supporting the Military Child November 2009 Dear Colleague: Some two million military children have had one or both parents deployed .

**Young Veterans Recognize Their Need for Long-Term Care | New**

[news.nurse.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=200661228025](http://news.nurse.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=200661228025) Linda Schwartz, RN, DrPH, FAAN, commissioner for the Department of Veterans' Affairs for the state of Connecticut, didn't think anybody would attend a discussion on Long Term Care.

**Military K-12 Partners | a DoDEA Educational Partnership Program**

[www.militaryk12partners.dodca.edu/collaborate.cfm?collid=aasa](http://www.militaryk12partners.dodca.edu/collaborate.cfm?collid=aasa) AASA Toolkit Helps School Leaders Support Military Children. ARLINGTON, Va. — Some two million U.S. military children have had one or both parents deployed since 2001. The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) has released a toolkit on Supporting the Military Child to help school leaders meet the needs of children whose parents are deployed or in military service. Creator is *Linda Spoonster Schwartz, Commissioner of Connecticut Department of Vet' Affairs & the Department of Def Educ Activity*

**2008****Women's Memorial Hosts Veterans Day Observance, Honors**

[www.militaryconnection.com/news/november-2008/honors-navajo-vets.htm](http://www.militaryconnection.com/news/november-2008/honors-navajo-vets.htm) ARLINGTON, Va.,



Nov. 12, 2008 – A Veterans Day observance yesterday at the Women in Military Service for America Memorial here honored the contributions of women

**Operation Gift Cards** [www.ctveterans.org/pdf%20pages/OGC-PressRJune24-06.pdf](http://www.ctveterans.org/pdf%20pages/OGC-PressRJune24-06.pdf) • PDF file Commissioner Linda Schwartz leads 4 other veterans' representatives in presenting \$3,500 in Gift Certificates to our wounded and injured troops in Walter Reed and Bethesda.

**Veterans Health Center Dedication** - State of Connecticut Office of ... [www.osc.ct.gov/public/events/may2008/vethlthctr.htm](http://www.osc.ct.gov/public/events/may2008/vethlthctr.htm)... CT Dept. of Veteran's Affairs Commissioner Linda Schwartz and Deputy Secretary of the US Department of Veterans Affairs Gordon Mansfield at the dedication ...

**State Sees To Remains Of Veterans** - Hartford Courant [articles.courant.com/2008-03-09/news/...ashes-funeral-homes-schwartz](http://articles.courant.com/2008-03-09/news/...ashes-funeral-homes-schwartz) State Veterans Affairs Commissioner Linda Schwartz wants to find the cremated remains of forgotten veterans left in funeral homes and give them a proper burial .

## **2007**

**WFCR: CT Vets from Iraq and Afghanistan Wars Meet** (2007-10-12) [www.publicbroadcasting.net/wfcr/news.newsmain?action=article&...State Veterans' Affairs](http://www.publicbroadcasting.net/wfcr/news.newsmain?action=article&...State%20Veterans%20Affairs) Commissioner Linda Schwartz says the Pentagon's heavy reliance on the National Guard and the Reserves in the Iraq war means those ...

**Vets Had Fewer Stress Symptoms After 9/11** - Firehouse Mobile [mobile.firehouse.com/news/.../vets-had-fewer-stress-symptoms-after-9-11](http://mobile.firehouse.com/news/.../vets-had-fewer-stress-symptoms-after-9-11) Jun 14, 2007 – But Linda Spoonster Schwartz, a nurse and veteran who is commissioner of Connecticut's Department of Veterans' Affairs, said the results may

**Project SHAD: American Servicemen Used As Guinea Pigs** [www.apfn.net/Messageboard/05-30-07/discussion.cgi.141.html](http://www.apfn.net/Messageboard/05-30-07/discussion.cgi.141.html) Project 112 SHAD LAB RATS Project SHAD: American Servicemen Used As Guinea Pigs <http://www.apfn.org/APFN/SHAD.htm> shad1.jpg (3886 bytes) Project SHAD, an acronym for ..

**VA Tries 'Exposure' Therapy on Older Female Vets : NPR** [www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=7638013-](http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=7638013-) Feb 28, 2007 ... Linda Schwartz is Connecticut's state commissioner for Veterans' Affairs. She says women veterans today are likely to change our thinking.

**The VVA Veteran: Righting A Terrible Wrong The Dedication of the ...** [www.vva.org/veteran/0808/levitow.html](http://www.vva.org/veteran/0808/levitow.html) Our Linda Schwartz. Linda Schwartz, ... But in Commissioner Schwartz's five years on the job, talk turned into action. And work.

**Women's Policy Inc.: Mental Health Treatment for Families of** [www.womenspolicy.org/site/News2?id=8126](http://www.womenspolicy.org/site/News2?id=8126) Linda Spoonster Schwartz, Connecticut commissioner of Veterans' Affairs, said, "In addressing the issue of mental health treatment for...

**2006**

**New Facility Approved for State's Veterans - Senate ...** [ctsenaterepublicans.com/.../new-facility-approved-for-state's-veterans-co...](http://ctsenaterepublicans.com/.../new-facility-approved-for-state's-veterans-co...) Jun 15, 2006 – He presented Connecticut Commissioner of Veterans' Affairs Linda Spoonster Schwartz with a check worth nearly \$22

**Disposition of the Air Force Health Study**

[www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record\\_id=11590&page=80](http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=11590&page=80) Limitations Related to the Design and Execution of the Study by Dr. Linda Schwartz.

**Soldiers Face Debilitating Diseases** - Propaganda Matrix.com

...[www.propagandamatrix.com/articles/february2006/100206debilitating.htm](http://www.propagandamatrix.com/articles/february2006/100206debilitating.htm) State Veterans Commissioner Linda Schwartz told NBC 30 that making the connection between battlefield

**2005****CTVA: Commissioner Bio** [www.ct.gov/ctva/cwp/view.asp?a=2005&q=290722](http://www.ct.gov/ctva/cwp/view.asp?a=2005&q=290722)

Commissioner Bio Abstract: Linda Spoonster Schwartz, RN, MSN, DrPH, FAAN Appointed on 16 May 2003 Confirmed by the General Assembly on 27 May 2003.

**2004****Conn.'s Insurance Chief Cogswell Willing to Stay if Asked by Newly ...**

[www.insurancejournal.com/news/east/2004/07/20/44187.htm](http://www.insurancejournal.com/news/east/2004/07/20/44187.htm) They included Department of Motor Vehicles Commissioner Gary DeFilippo, Veterans Affairs Commissioner Linda Schwartz,

**Speaking of Nursing--: Narratives of Practice, Research, Policy, ... - Page 326 - Google**

[Books Result books.google.com/books?isbn=0763748544](http://books.google.com/books?isbn=0763748544) **Donna Diers** - 2004 – Medical Linda Spoonster Schwartz, now the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs for the State of Connecticut, was a graduate student in psychiatric nursing

**US war veterans had fewer stress symptoms after 9/11 - USA Today**

[usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/health/2004-01-14-veterans-stress\\_x.htm](http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/health/2004-01-14-veterans-stress_x.htm) Jan 14, 2004 – But Linda Spoonster Schwartz, a nurse and veteran who is commissioner of Connecticut's

**Military Sexual Trauma Counseling Act - Project Vote Smart** [votesmart.org/public-statement/.../military-sexual-trauma-counseling-act](http://votesmart.org/public-statement/.../military-sexual-trauma-counseling-act)

One witness, Linda Spoonster-Schwartz, the former Chairperson of the VA's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans and now the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs for Connecticut.

**2003****HARTFORD, Ct - Health problems, homelessness await** ...[hpn.asu.edu/archives/2003-October/007626.html](http://hpn.asu.edu/archives/2003-October/007626.html)

Oct 2, 2003 – State Veterans Affairs Commissioner Linda Spoonster Schwartz said she doesn't know how many of those soon-to-be veterans will be seeking

**THE VIEW/From Rocky Hill; Leading the Way With a Veteran's Touch**

**www.nytimes.com** Jul 13, 2003 – THE new veterans affairs commissioner, Linda Spoonster Schwartz, is both inspired and haunted by the men she treated as an Air Force nurse .

**The Right Person At The Right Time .New Veterans Affairs ...** New London Day 2003 Susan Haugh AP — During one of her first days as Connecticut's Veterans Affairs commissioner, Linda Spoonster Schwartz learned of a Vietnam veteran who

**Linda Spoonster Schwartz, DrPH, MSN, FAAN, a research scientist**

**...www.freepatentsonline.com/article/Nursing-Education.../108649344.htm...Linda** Spoonster Schwartz, DrPH, MSN, FAAN, a research scientist at the Yale University School of Nursing, has

**2000**

**The Eyes Of The Nurse - Hartford Courant** articles.courant.com/...08.../0008060323\_1\_nurse Aug 6, 2000 – When Linda Spoonster Schwartz joined the Air Force as a Nurse in 1967, she got what was called the Vietnam

**Disposition of the Air Force Health Study - Page 80 - Committee on the Disposition of the Air Force Health Study** - 2006 - Medical... report in 2000, Dr. Linda Spoonster Schwartz—a Yale University researcher and retired Major USAF nurse—offered additional observations

**1989**

**Nurses' War Statue Mired In Strife - Page 2 - Philly.com** articles.philly.com/1989-03-05/news/26129925\_1\_diane...s.../2 Mar 5, 1989 – "I think we did it backwards," conceded retired Air Force nurse Linda Spoonster Schwartz, the group's legislative affairs director. "We're

**Vietnam War Statue : Nurses Face Monumental Frustration - Los**

**...articles.latimes.com/1989-02-14/news/mn-2173\_1\_vietnam-nurses** Feb 14, 1989 – "I think we did it backwards," concedes retired Air Force nurse Linda Spoonster Schwartz, legislative affairs

**1988****Female Vietnam Vet Statue Draws Criticism - AP News Archive**

**www.apnewsarchive.com/.../id-6420f3cccc7865900d8bfd5af5c974f** Jun 22, 1988 – Retired Air Force nurse Linda Spoonster Schwartz told the panel that Frederick E. Hart, who sculpted the

**9. Agreements or Arrangements**

**X** See OGE Form 278. (If, for your nomination, you have completed an OGE Form 278 Executive Branch Personnel Public Financial Disclosure Report, you may check the box here to complete this section and then proceed to the next section.)

**As of the date of filing your OGE Form 278, report your agreements or arrangements for: (1) continuing participation in an employee benefit plan (e.g. pension, 401k, deferred compensation); (2) continuation of payment by a former employer (including severance payments); (3) leaves of absence; and (4) future employment.**

**Provide information regarding any agreements or arrangements you have concerning (1) future employment; (2) a leave of absence during your period of Government service; (3) continuation of payments by a former employer other than the United States Government; and (4) continuing participation in an employee welfare or benefit plan maintained by a former employer other than United States Government retirement benefits.**

<u>Status and Terms of Any Agreement or Arrangement</u>	<u>Parties</u>	<u>Date</u> (month/year)

**10. Lobbying**

**In the past ten years, have you registered as a lobbyist? If so, please indicate the state, federal, or local bodies with which you have registered (e.g., House, Senate, California Secretary of State). NO**

**11. Testifying Before the Congress**

**(A) Do you agree to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Congress upon the request of such Committee? YES**

**(B) Do you agree to provide such information as is requested by such a committee? YES**

[Letters from the Office of Government Ethics follows:]



United States  
**Office of Government Ethics**  
1201 New York Avenue, NW., Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20005-3917

OCT - 2 2013

The Honorable Bernard Sanders  
Chairman  
Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On August 9, 2013, the Office of Government Ethics (OGE) transmitted to the Committee the financial disclosure report of Linda S. Schwartz in connection with her nomination for the position of Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Enclosed are a letter from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and a letter from Ms. Schwartz forwarding an addendum to Ms. Schwartz's financial disclosure report and a supplement to her ethics agreement. With regard to her financial disclosure report, the letter forwards an addendum page to Schedule D of the report.

We have reviewed this additional submission and have also obtained advice from the Department of Veterans Affairs concerning any possible conflict in light of its functions and the nominee's proposed duties. Based on the information provided, OGE continues to believe that Ms. Schwartz is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of interest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Walter M. Shaub, Jr.", written in black ink.

Walter M. Shaub, Jr.  
Director

Enclosures



United States  
**Office of Government Ethics**  
1201 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20005-3917

**AUG 09 2013**

The Honorable Bernard Sanders  
Chairman  
Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In accordance with the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, I enclose a copy of the financial disclosure report filed by Linda S. Schwartz, who has been nominated by President Obama for the position of Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning, Department of Veterans Affairs.

We have reviewed the report and have obtained advice from the agency concerning any possible conflict in light of its functions and the nominee's proposed duties. Also enclosed is an ethics agreement outlining the actions that the nominee will undertake to avoid conflicts of interest. Unless a date for compliance is indicated in the ethics agreement, the nominee must fully comply within three months of confirmation with any action specified in the ethics agreement.

Based thereon, we believe that this nominee is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of interest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don W. Fox".

Don W. Fox  
Principal Deputy Director

Enclosures

[A letter from the Designated Agency Ethics Official, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs follow:]



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
Designated Agency Ethics Official

SEP 27 2013

Walter M. Shaub, Jr.  
Director  
Office of Government Ethics  
Suite 500  
1201 New York Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20005-3917

Dear Mr. Shaub:

Enclosed for your review is a letter from Linda Schwartz, the President's nominee to be the Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning for the Department of Veterans Affairs. She requests that we accept the addendum to her Public Financial Disclosure report (OGE Form 278) because she inadvertently omitted from the original report her former outside positions with the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs, which she served unpaid as President from September 2010 – September 2011, and as Vice-President Northeast Region from September 2011 – September 2013, by virtue of her position as Commissioner of the State of Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs.

In addition, Ms. Schwartz requests that we accept her letter as a supplement to her Ethics Agreement. First, she agrees that for a period of one year after resignation from her position as Vice-President, Northeast Region, she will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter involving specific parties in which the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs is a party or represents a party, unless she is first authorized to participate, pursuant to 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502(d). In addition, in the Ethics Agreement, she also inadvertently failed to state her outside positions with, and the steps she will take upon confirmation to resign from, the Business and Professional Women's Foundation – Joining Forces Advisory Council, and the Military Mind Body Health Consortium Advisory Board.

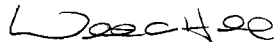
Pursuant to 5 C.F.R. § 2634.605(c)(2), I have reviewed both the supplement to her ethics agreement and the addendum to Schedule D, Part I, of Ms. Schwartz's OGE Form 278. Based on that review, and in view of the commitments made by Ms. Schwartz in the letter, which serves as the supplement to her ethics agreement, I conclude that the report is complete and discloses no conflict of interest under applicable laws or regulations. Therefore, I have initialed and dated the new item listed on Schedule D, Part I (page 9A of 9 pages), and now transmit it to you for further action

2.

Walter M. Shaub, Jr.

along with the letter from Ms. Schwartz requesting the acceptance of the amended documents.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. A. Hall".

Walter A. Hall  
Assistant General Counsel and  
Designated Agency Ethics Official

Enclosures



[Letters from Linda S. Schwartz to the Office of General Counsel,  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs follow:]

September 23, 2013

Mr. Walter A. Hall (023)  
Assistant General Counsel and  
Designated Agency Ethics Official  
U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Mr. Hall:

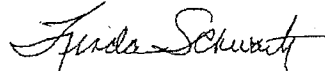
The purpose of this letter is to request an addendum to my Public Financial Disclosure Report (OGE Form 278) to incorporate two outside positions with an organization, which I inadvertently omitted from the original certified report. Additionally, this letter is a supplement to my Ethics Agreement of July 31, 2013.

I have been affiliated with numerous organizations throughout my career. I attempted to provide a list of organizations that required reporting, but unintentionally omitted three organizations that should have been on the report or addressed in the Ethics Agreement:

1. National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs, President (unpaid) 9/2010-9/2011, and Vice President Northeast Region (unpaid) 9/2011 – 9/2013. These outside positions were inadvertently omitted from my OGE Form 278. For a period of one year after my resignation, I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter involving specific parties in which the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs is a party or represents a party, unless I am first authorized to participate, pursuant to 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502(d).
2. Business and Professional Women's Foundation – Women Joining Forces Advisory Council, Council Member (unpaid) 10/2010-present. Upon confirmation, I will resign from my position with the Business and Professional Women's Foundation – Women Joining Forces Advisory Council.
3. Military Mind Body Health Consortium Advisory Board, Advisory Board Member (unpaid) 04/2013-present. Upon confirmation, I will resign from my position with the Military Mind Body Health Consortium Advisory Board.

I have been advised that this supplement to my ethics agreement will be posted publicly, consistent with 5 U.S.C. § 552, on the website of the U.S. Office of Government Ethics with other ethics agreements of Presidential nominees who file public financial disclosure reports.

Sincerely,



Linda S. Schwartz

Enclosure

Mr. Walter A. Hall (023)  
Assistant General Counsel and  
Designated Agency Ethics Official  
U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Mr. Hall:

The purpose of this letter is to describe the steps that I will take to avoid any actual or apparent conflict of interest in the event that I am confirmed for the position of Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

As required by 18 U.S.C. § 208(a), I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter that has a direct and predictable effect on my financial interests or those of any person whose interests are imputed to me, unless I first obtain a written waiver, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(1), or qualify for a regulatory exemption, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(2). I understand that the interests of the following persons are imputed to me: any spouse or minor child of mine; any general partner of a partnership in which I am a limited or general partner; any organization in which I serve as officer, director, trustee, general partner or employee; and any person or organization with which I am negotiating or have an arrangement concerning prospective employment.

I will divest my interests in Bristol-Myers Squibb Company within 90 days of my confirmation. I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter that has a direct and predictable effect on the financial interests of this entity until I have divested it, unless I first obtain a written waiver, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(1), or qualify for a regulatory exemption, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(2).

Upon confirmation, I will resign from my position as Commissioner, State of Connecticut Department of Veterans' Affairs. For one year after my resignation, I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter involving specific parties in which the State of Connecticut Department of Veterans' Affairs is a party or represents a party, unless I am first authorized to participate, pursuant to 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502(d).

Upon confirmation, I will resign from my unpaid positions as President of the Connecticut Veterans Memorial, and Clinical Professor of Nursing with Yale University School of Nursing. For a period of one year after my resignation from these positions, I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter involving specific parties in which the Connecticut Veterans Memorial or Yale University School of Nursing is a party or represents a party, unless I am first authorized to participate, pursuant to 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502(d). Upon confirmation, I will also resign from my position on the Expert Panel on Military/Veteran Health of the American Academy of Nursing.

2.

Walter A. Hall (023)

My spouse is a co-owner and employee of Noah's Restaurant, Inc., Stonington, CT. I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter that has a direct and predictable effect on the financial interests of the restaurant unless I first obtain a written waiver, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(1), or qualify for a regulatory exemption pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(2).

I have been advised that this ethics agreement will be posted publicly, consistent with 5 U.S.C. § 552, on the website of the U.S. Office of government ethics with other ethics agreements of Presidential nominees who file public financial disclosure reports.

Finally, I understand that as an appointee I am required to sign the Ethics Pledge (Exec. Order No. 13490) and that I will be bound by the requirements and restrictions therein in addition to the commitments I have made in this and any other ethics agreement.

Sincerely,



Linda S. Schwartz

Chairman SANDERS. Thank you very much.  
Ms. Tobias, we would be very pleased to hear from you.

**STATEMENT OF CONSTANCE B. TOBIAS, JD, NOMINEE TO BE  
CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF VETERANS APPEALS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

Ms. TOBIAS. Chairman Sanders, Ranking Member Burr, distinguished Members of the Committee, good morning and thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I ask that my written testimony be entered into the record.

I am honored that President Obama has nominated me to serve as Chairman of the Board of Veterans' Appeals. Most of my career as an attorney and a judge has been dedicated to the mission of repaying the debt of honor owed to our brave men and women in uniform.

I am eager for the opportunity to redouble those efforts as part of a leadership team working to transform the Department of Veterans Affairs in order to meet the emerging challenges of the 21st century.

My long-standing commitment to serving veterans arose in part from the guidance, love, and support of my family. In particular, I want to remember and recognize my father and his two brothers whose dedication and service to this country continue to inspire me.

I would also like to thank my family and friends for their presence and support as well as all of my coworkers who took time to share this important day with me.

Let me also recognize the long career of Stephen Keller, who recently retired from the board, for his many years of Federal service. I knew and served with Mr. Keller and with three prior board

chairmen. It would be an honor for me to follow in their footsteps and to lead more than 600 dedicated, hard-working, and professional employees of the board.

Finally, I want to recognize the essential role that the various veterans service organizations play at the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

These organizations offer invaluable insights and serve as partners in much of the work conducted at the board. If confirmed, I look forward to working with them.

I know well the critical challenges facing the board in the coming years to ensure fair, timely, and accurate results in an appeals process that issued more than 41,000 decisions last year.

I first came to VA in 1983, and my passion for serving our veterans did not fade during my more than 20 years there serving as an attorney advisor, a staff attorney with the Office of General Counsel, counsel to the board chairman, Veterans Law Judge and Chief Veterans Law Judge.

During my tenure at the board, I actively participated in initiatives designed to speed claim processing, increase decision output, and eliminate the backlog of pending cases.

My appointment 6 years ago as Chairman of the Departmental Appeals Board at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services allowed me to develop leadership methods that led to dramatic improvements in both quality and productivity.

The Departmental Appeals Board itself resolves disputed decisions in a wide range of HHS programs with outside parties such as State agencies, universities, nursing homes, and health care providers and suppliers.

During my term, the Departmental Appeals Board has made extraordinary progress in eliminating a backlog of appeals in two divisions and significantly reduced the backlog in a third by focusing on employee performance, reengineering its operations, and improving its case management techniques.

My previous work at the board and my previous experience at HHS have equipped me to bring a unique perspective to the board's ongoing efforts to streamline operations, provide timely, clear, and accurate decisions and continue robust coordination with the Veterans Benefits Administration, a key partner in the appeals effort.

When our veterans come to us with questions about disability claims, medical care, or other benefit determinations, they need to have ready access to the appeals process, streamlined handling of their claims, and answers that are correct and understandable. We owe them that. In the 21st century, veterans expect real-time information on the status of their appeals.

As we all know, appeal numbers are expected to grow dramatically over the coming years. To provide veterans what they deserve in the face of growing needs will demand innovative and nimble solutions taking full advantage of the efficiencies of technology and the tremendous potential of all the board's strong judges and staff.

If confirmed as Chairman of the Board of Veterans' Appeals, I am committed to working with this Committee, the Congress more broadly, veteran service organizations, the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, other stakeholders, and most importantly all the

wonderful employees at the board to ensure that we provide timely and high quality decisions to America's heroes.

I am also committed to working closely with the Veterans Benefits Administration and other VA partners to improve the overall claims and appeals system for the benefits of the veterans we serve.

Should I be confirmed, I will serve with passion and conviction as an advocate on behalf of all of America's veterans.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to answering any question you may have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Tobias follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CONSTANCE B. TOBIAS, NOMINEE TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Chairman Sanders, Ranking Member Burr, distinguished Members of the Committee: good morning and thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored that President Obama has nominated me to serve as Chairman of the Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board). Much of my career as an attorney and a judge has been dedicated to the mission of repaying the debt of honor owed to the men and women who have worn our Nation's uniform. I am eager for the opportunity to redouble those efforts as part of the leadership team working to transform the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to meet the emerging challenges of the 21st century.

My longstanding commitment to serving Veterans arose in part from the guidance, love, and support of my family. In particular, I want to remember and recognize my father and his two brothers whose dedication and service to this country continue to inspire me. As a family, we have learned firsthand how crucial the benefits provided to Veterans by a grateful country can truly be for them and their families. For example, our family home was obtained with the help of the VA loan guaranty program and my uncles received high quality and compassionate care at the VA Medical Center in Salisbury, North Carolina. I am excited about this opportunity to give back by adding my passion, dedication and leadership to continuing the enhancement of the VA's appeals so that it provides timely decisions to Veterans who seek our services.

I would like to thank my family and friends for their steadfast support, as well as all of my co-workers who have helped me along the way. I would also like to recognize the long career of Steven Keller, who recently retired from the Board, for his many years of Federal service. I knew and served with Mr. Keller and with three prior Board Chairmen. It would be an honor for me to follow in their footsteps and to lead the more than 600 dedicated, hard-working, and professional employees of the Board. Finally, I want to recognize the essential role that the various Veterans Service Organizations play at the Board of Veterans Appeals. These organizations offer invaluable insights and serve as partners in much of the work conducted at the Board and, if confirmed, I look forward to working with them.

I know well the critical challenges facing the Board in the coming years to ensure fair, timely and accurate results in an appeal process that issued more than 41,000 decisions last year. I first came to VA in 1983, and my passion for serving our Veterans did not fade during my more than 20 years there. I wrote thousands of draft decisions as attorney-advisor and became a staff attorney with the Office of General Counsel working with the Department of Justice on some of the first appeals from the U. S. Court of Veterans Claims to the U. S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. I then served as counsel to the Board Chairman, directing the professional activities of the Litigation Support Division, addressing the impact of court decisions on VA regulations and Board operations, and guiding litigation strategies for pending appeals. I focused especially on reducing administrative processing time of appeals remanded to the Board by the court. After I became a judge at the Board, I conducted hundreds of hearings and decided thousands of appeals. That role gave me the privilege of listening as our Nation's Veterans shared their stories of service and courage and made me appreciate the critical role the Board plays in many of their lives.

From 1995 to 2007, I took on a leadership role as Chief Veterans' Law Judge. In that role, I mentored judges and helped them to develop skills to increase productivity and work effectively with attorney staff. I also helped improve the quality of written decisions and managed efficient case distribution. It was my responsibility

to ensure that cases were reassigned as necessary and that every judge and attorney could meet or exceed numerical performance goals in order to ensure the timely review of appeals.

During my tenure at the Board, I actively participated in initiatives designed to speed claims processing, increase decision output and eliminate the backlog of pending cases. I provided executive leadership to the development of the attorney telework program now in place at the Board. I also founded the Board of Veterans' Appeals Leadership Initiative to provide unique opportunities for employees at all levels, at my agency and throughout VA, to develop the leadership skills necessary for advancement. VA employees benefited from guidance contributed by a wide range of leader-models, including VA Assistant Secretaries, judges, law school deans and professors, as well as state and Federal elected officials. As a result, the agency saw increases in dedication and workplace performance by the participants.

My appointment six years ago as Chairman of the Departmental Appeals Board (DAB) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) allowed me to develop leadership methods that led to dramatic improvements in both quality and productivity. DAB itself resolves disputed decisions in a wide range of HHS programs with outside parties such as state agencies, universities, nursing homes, and health care providers. In a single year, disputes heard by DAB may involve as much as \$1 billion in Federal grant funds. DAB also houses the Medicare Appeals Council, the final level of administrative review for claims denials and overpayments in the Medicare program nationwide.

During my term, DAB has made extraordinary progress in eliminating a backlog of appeals in two divisions and significantly reducing the backlog in a third by improving employee performance, re-engineering its operations and improving its case management techniques. Over the last several years, DAB launched an electronic case filing system, called DAB E-File, permitting parties to file documents electronically and reducing the paperwork and time required to process cases. Together with DAB's internal case management system, DAB E-File has proven to be an efficient means of managing DAB's case load, reducing administrative costs and space requirements. DAB has also worked actively with the Office of Medicare Hearings and Appeals and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services to bring electronic case files to the Medicare workload.

I have also focused significant energy in my work at DAB in fully integrating video-teleconferencing (VTC) into the work of judges in all of the operating divisions with the result that, in FY 2013, no judges at DAB had to travel to conduct hearings. Not only were agency funds saved, but the time of judges and staff was better used and parties benefited from more flexibility and reduced costs. We further leveraged the equipment to provide mediation services in DAB cases and HHS workplace disputes as well as free or low-cost educational opportunities to our staff through webinars and online training. I have also emphasized clear writing in plain English in all DAB decisions. I see strong parallels in the work with which I have been engaged at DAB and the efforts that are currently underway at the Board.

My previous work at the Board and my recent experience at HHS have equipped me to bring a unique perspective to the Board's ongoing efforts to streamline operations, provide timely, clear and accurate decisions, and continue robust coordination with the Veterans Benefits Administration—a key partner in the appeals effort. When our Veterans come to us with questions about disability claims, medical care or other benefit determinations, they need to have ready access to the appeals process, streamlined handling of their claims and answers that are correct and understandable. We owe them that. And in the 21st century, Veterans expect real-time information on the status of their appeals. As we all know, appeal numbers are expected to grow dramatically over the coming years. To provide Veterans what they deserve in the face of growing needs will demand innovative and nimble solutions taking full advantage of the efficiencies of technologies and the tremendous potential of all of the Board's strong judges and staff.

My vision centers on using the funds made available to the Board to those two ends. My number one priority, if confirmed, must be to hire and train the strongest possible front line staff to review and decide Veterans' appeals. The second goal is to leverage opportunities provided by technology to the maximum possible extent, including to:

- coordinate workloads and assignments;
- improve and expand existing automation,
- develop effective adjudication/decisionmaking tools; and
- expand VTC for hearings and staff development.

If I return to the Board to carry out this vision, I will look for every opportunity to streamline and modernize management and re-engineer work flow to best serve today's Veterans.

In summary, I am thrilled at the prospect of leading a 21st century Board of Veterans' Appeals, not daunted. With this nomination, I consider myself one of the luckiest people in the world because I value the chance to better serve those who have served us all.

If confirmed as Chairman of the Board of Veterans' Appeals, I am committed to working with this Committee, the Congress more broadly, Veterans Service Organizations, the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, other stakeholders, and most importantly all of the wonderful employees at the Board to ensure that we provide timely and high-quality decisions to America's heroes. I am also committed to working closely and collaboratively with the Veterans Benefits Administration and other VA partners to improve the overall claims and appeals system for the benefit of the Veterans we serve. Should I be confirmed, I will serve with passion and conviction as an advocate on behalf of all of America's Veterans.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

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RESPONSE TO PREHEARING QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. BERNARD SANDERS TO  
CONSTANCE B. TOBIAS, NOMINEE TO BE CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS,  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

*Question 1.* For what reason do you seek this position?

Response. I seek this position to fulfill a personal commitment of service to our Nation and its Veterans. The commitment was born from two sources: first, my family's experiences in the military and as recipients of veteran's benefits and second, my own years of serving as an attorney, a judge and a leader at the Board of Veterans' Appeals. Hearing our Veterans tell of their service, their courage, their pain and their needs is what drives me to reach out for the challenge of meeting those needs and honoring that service. I believe that I would bring deep technical understanding of the issues and seasoned leadership skills to this position. From my current work at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Departmental Appeals Board, I have the experience of re-engineering workflow, re-energizing staff, and deploying the best technological solutions to confront high-volume Medicare appeals. My long familiarity with the dedicated VA employees and the complex systems at work in the Veterans appeals context will allow me to effectively apply the lessons of that experience to bring the results that our Veterans deserve.

*Question 2.* Please describe your management style and decisionmaking process.

Response. As a manager, I seek to build a strong and effective leadership team committed to improving quality and productivity. I seek to be innovative and hands-on as a supervisor. I hold myself and those who work for me accountable for results, and I have a deep commitment to the professional growth of each employee. Before reaching a decision, I solicit input from the leadership team and, to the extent practicable, external stakeholders, encouraging dissenting views. I also attempt to be open to feedback and willing to change my approach based on new information and discussions with those I supervise.

*Question 3.* If we were to ask your prior subordinates about your management style, what would they say?

Response. I believe those who have worked with me have found me decisive and innovative in seeking creative solutions to longstanding problems. They would likely say that I welcome input but accept ultimate responsibility, and that I believe in accountability for myself and those around me, but treat everyone with respect. They know that I invest in growing people so they can invest in producing results.

*Question 4.* Have you discussed with Secretary Shinseki the duties and the role you would assume as Chairman of the Board of Veterans' Appeals if you are confirmed? If so, what specific areas of the job were discussed?

Response. Secretary Shinseki has expressed to me his strong commitment to transform the Department to meet the challenges of the 21st century so that we may continue to repay the debt of honor owed to the men and women, and their families who have "borne the battle." The Secretary places a high priority on ensuring that the Board will be able to meet the challenges associated with an anticipated rise in the number of appeals precipitated by the Veterans Benefits Administration's success in reducing the claims backlog. If confirmed, I will have Secretary Shinseki's full support as I focus on the people, processes and technologies that will allow the Board to meet these challenges.

*Question 5.* What do you believe are the most significant challenges currently confronting the Board of Veterans' Appeals? Which of these challenges will you focus on and how do you intend to address them?

Response. I strongly support the priorities that Secretary Shinseki has established in the Department of Veterans Affairs Strategic Plan Refresh FY 2011–2015 and agree with what it outlines for the Board of Veterans' Appeals, the Veterans Benefits Administration and all of VA to “transform the Department to meet the emerging challenges of the 21st century as we continue to repay the debt owed to the men and women, and their families, who have borne the battle.” It is my view, that the number one issue facing the Board of Veterans' Appeals is the continuing challenges associated with the claims and appeals backlog. Increases in the number and complexity of appeals require sustained focus on workforce training, business process improvements, and integration of appropriate technology.

*Question 6.* According to VA's Fiscal Year 2014 budget request, Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) represent 79.6 percent of appellants before the Board of Veterans' Appeals. Given the significant role that VSO's play in representing appellants before the Board of Veterans' Appeals, how do you plan to work with the Veterans service organizations?

Response. If confirmed, I plan to work closely and collaboratively with Veterans Service Organizations (VSO). If confirmed, I anticipate building on the existing efforts the Board of Veterans' Appeals has taken to involve these knowledgeable and highly experienced organizations early in developing initiatives to improve the appeals process and other areas. I look forward to building relationships with VSOs to serve Veterans, their families and survivors.

*Question 7.* A portion of the Board of Veterans' Appeals workforce is part of a bargaining unit. What experience do you have working with labor partners and how would you approach this relationship with the Board of Veterans' Appeals labor partners should you be confirmed?

Response. A large percentage of my workforce at the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Departmental Appeals Board (DAB) is also part of a bargaining unit. I am committed to fulfilling our labor management responsibilities. Two DAB employees, one of whom is the President of the bargaining unit, spend a portion of their available duty time performing representational activities. The President of the bargaining unit and I meet at least monthly to touch base or discuss concerns. My contacts with HHS' labor partners have always been professional and cordial and, if confirmed, I would adopt a similar approach to working with the VA's labor partners.

*Question 8.* A significant portion of VA's claims transformation plan focuses on a paperless benefits system. Do you have experience working within or implementing a paperless benefits, claims, or appellate system?

Response. The Department of Health and Human Services' Departmental Appeals Board (DAB) is an organization which consists of Board Members appointed by the Secretary, Administrative Law Judges, Administrative Appeals Judges who serve on the Medicare Appeals Council, and organizational divisions that support the judges and other organizational functions. Under my leadership, the DAB launched DAB E-File, its electronic case filing system for the Board Members and Administrative Law Judges. The system allows parties to file documents electronically and is linked to the DAB's internal case management system. DAB currently accepts electronic filings in cases involving: (1) Medicare provider and supplier enrollment denial, effective date, and revocation determinations by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, (2) fraud and abuse determinations to exclude providers and suppliers from participation in Medicare, Medicaid, and all Federal health care programs by the HHS Office of Inspector General, (3) the Early Retiree Reinsurance Program, (4) Food and Drug Administration tobacco product cases and (5) Determinations in mandatory grant programs, including disallowances of state claims. DAB E-File has proven to be an efficient means of managing the DAB's case load, reducing administrative handling and decreasing space required to store files.

*Question 9.* What role do you envision for the Board of Veterans' Appeals in using technology to aid in the timeliness and accuracy of appeals?

Response. If confirmed, I would seek technological advances that offer Veterans easy access to information about their appeals and, in an effort to improve timeliness and avoid remands, the capability to electronically submit evidence directly to the Board. I am eager to learn more about the tools and job aids developed by the Veterans Benefits Administration to determine whether these tools might be able to be leveraged to improve accuracy at the Board.



*Question 10.* How long do you think a veteran should have to wait for an accurate decision on an appeal? What ideas do you have to improve the timeliness of appeals decisions?

Response. The length of time that an appeal takes to be completed depends on a several different factors, including the number and complexity of conditions being reviewed. In my view, it is essential that we provide Veterans with quick and accurate final decisions. I look forward to working with leadership at the Board to leverage technology and reorganize business practices to improve the timeliness of decisions.

*Question 11.* In your opinion, is the Department's Fiscal Year 2014 budget request, which anticipates supporting 492 FTE, sufficient to support workload requirements at the Board of Veterans' Appeals?

Response. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Department leadership, Congress, and other VA stakeholders to assess current needs and maximize efficiencies in resources to address the predicted rise in appeals.

*Question 12.* What is your vision for employee training at the Board of Veterans' Appeals? What ideas do you have to improve the accuracy of appeals decisions?

Response. These questions belong together because the best way to improve the accuracy of appeals decisions is to enhance the skill set and knowledge base of those who produce the decisions. If confirmed, I would ensure that Board of Veterans' Appeals training programs offer training activities appropriate to employees' diverse needs at every level. My primary focus would be on the large number of incoming attorneys. Rather than disperse them throughout the organization, forcing judges and staff attorneys to train them "on the fly," while managing full dockets, I would form a trainee corps led by judges specializing in attorney development with selected senior attorneys as coaches to quickly and effectively inculcate a consistent level of subject matter expertise and excellent case management skills. Next, I would develop systematic in-service training programs for existing attorneys to upgrade skills, encourage career development, and develop our next generation of leaders and judges. To enhance judicial management and cultivate outstanding decision-making, I would partner with the National Judicial College to bring our judges all the tools they need. Finally, those who perform administrative and technical functions need opportunities to learn about the fast-changing technological environment and master new ways of doing business.

*Question 13.* Chapter 71 of title 38 of the United States Code provides the statutory authority for and framework within which the Board of Veterans' Appeals operates. Do you believe the statutory framework governing VA's administrative appellate process is conducive to producing timely and accurate decisions? What recommendations, if any, do you have for Congress to improve the statutory framework?

Response. Based on my experience as an attorney, a judge and a leader at the Board of Veterans' Appeals, I believe that the current statutory framework governing VA's administrative appellate process is conducive to producing timely and accurate decisions. I am aware that the VA has proposed legislation that would improve the statutory framework by redefining the term "reasons and bases," reducing the time period for filing a notice of disagreement following the issuance of a rating decision and permitting the Board to determine the most expeditious type of hearing to afford Veterans. I am confident that these proposals will enhance efforts to improve timeliness and accuracy in decisionmaking.

*Question 14.* Do you agree to appear before the Committee at such times and concerning such matters as the Committee might request for so long as you serve in the position for which you now seek confirmation?

Response. If confirmed, I agree to appear before the Committee at such times and concerning such matters as the Committee might request.

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[The Committee questionnaire for Presidential nominees follows:]

## PART I: ALL OF THE INFORMATION IN THIS PART WILL BE MADE PUBLIC

1. Basic Biographical Information

Please provide the following information.

<i>Position to Which You Have Been Nominated</i>	
<u>Name of Position</u>	<u>Date of Nomination</u>
Chairman of the Board of Veterans' Appeals	March 21, 2013

<i>Current Legal Name</i>			
<u>First Name</u>	<u>Middle Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Suffix</u>
Constance	Black	Tobias	

<i>Addresses</i>					
<u>Residential Address</u> (do not include street address)			<u>Office Address</u> (include street address)		
			Street: U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services Departmental Appeals Board 330 Independence Avenue, SW MS 6127 Rm G-644		
City: Clinton	State: MD	Zip: 20735	City: Washington	State: DC	Zip: 20201

<i>Other Names Used</i>						
<u>First Name</u>	<u>Middle Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Suffix</u>	<u>Check if Maiden Name</u>	<u>Name Used From</u> (Month/Year) (Check box if estimate)	<u>Name Used To</u> (Month/Year) (Check box if estimate)
Constance	Travis	Black		X	March 1958 <sup>Est</sup> X	August 1983 <sup>Est</sup> X
Connie		Black			September 1970 <sup>Est</sup> X	May 1979 <sup>Est</sup> □
Constance		Black-Tobias			August 1983 <sup>Est</sup> X	December 1986 <sup>Est</sup> X

<i>Birth Year and Place</i>	
Year of Birth (Do not include month and day)	Place of Birth
1958	Mooresville, North Carolina

<i>Marital Status</i>					
Check All That Describe Your Current Situation:					
Never Married <input type="checkbox"/>	Married <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Separated <input type="checkbox"/>	Annulled <input type="checkbox"/>	Divorced <input type="checkbox"/>	Widowed <input type="checkbox"/>

<i>Spouse's Name (current spouse only)</i>			
Spouse's First Name	Spouse's Middle Name	Spouse's Last Name	Spouse's Suffix
Gary	Paul	Tobias	

<i>Spouse's Other Names Used (current spouse only)</i>						
First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Suffix	Check if Maiden Name	Name Used From (Month/Year) (Check box if estimate)	Name Used To (Month/Year) (Check box if estimate)
None					Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/>
					Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/>

<i>Children's Names (if over 18)</i>			
First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Suffix
Zachary	Aaron	Tobias	
Elliot	Michael	Tobias	

**2. Education**

List all post-secondary schools attended.

<u>Name of School</u>	<u>Type of School</u> (vocational/technical/trade school, college/university/military college, correspondence/distance/extension/online school)	<u>Date Began School</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate)	<u>Date Ended School</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate) (check "present" box if still in school)	<u>Degree</u>	<u>Date Awarded</u>
Saint Augustine's College	College	June 1976 <sup>Est</sup> <input type="checkbox"/>	May 1979 <sup>Est Present</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	B.A.	May 1979
Cornell University Law School	Law School	August 1979 <sup>Est</sup> <input type="checkbox"/>	May 1982 <sup>Est Present</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	J.D.	May 1982
		<sup>Est</sup> <input type="checkbox"/>	<sup>Est Present</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		
		<sup>Est</sup> <input type="checkbox"/>	<sup>Est Present</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		

### 3. Employment

(A) List all of your employment activities, including unemployment and self-employment. If the employment activity was military duty, list separate employment activity periods to show each change of military duty station. Do not list employment before your 18th birthday unless to provide a minimum of two years of employment history.

<u>Type of Employment</u> (Active Military Duty Station, National Guard/Reserve, USPHS Commissioned Corps, Other federal employment, State Government (Non-federal Employment), Self-employment, Unemployment, Federal Contractor, Non-Government Employment (excluding self-employment), Other	<u>Name of Your Employer/Assigned Duty Station</u>	<u>Most Recent Position Title/Rank</u>	<u>Location</u> (City and State only)	<u>Date Employment Began</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate)	<u>Date Employment Ended</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate) (check "present" box if still employed)
Unemployed				May 1982 <sup>Est</sup>	Dec. 1982 <sup>Est</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Non-Federal Employment	Arthur Andersen	Editor/Proof-reader		Jan. 1983 <sup>Est</sup>	October 1983 <sup>Est</sup>
Federal Employment	Board of Veterans' Appeals Dept. of Veterans Affairs	Staff Attorney	Washington, D.C.	October 1983 <sup>Est</sup>	May 1991 <sup>Est</sup>
Federal Employment	Office of the General Counsel Dept. of Veterans Affairs	Staff Attorney	Washington, D.C.	May 1991 <sup>Est</sup> <input type="checkbox"/>	May 1993 <sup>Est</sup> <input type="checkbox"/>
Federal Employment	Board of Veterans' Appeals Dept. of Veterans Affairs	Counsel to the Chairman	Washington, D.C.	May 1993 <sup>Est</sup> <input type="checkbox"/>	Feb. 1995 <sup>Est</sup> <input type="checkbox"/>
Federal Employment	Board of Veterans' Appeals Dept. of Veterans Affairs	Veterans Law Judge	Washington, D.C.	Feb. 1995 <sup>Est</sup> <input type="checkbox"/>	April 2007 <sup>Est</sup> <input type="checkbox"/>
Federal Employment	Board of Veterans' Appeals Dept. of Veterans Affairs	Chief Veterans Law Judge	Washington, D.C.	October 1995 <sup>Est</sup>	April 2007 <sup>Est</sup> <input type="checkbox"/>
Federal Employment	Departmental Appeals Board Dept. of Health and Human Services	Chair	Washington, D.C.	April 2007 <sup>Est</sup>	present <sup>Est</sup>

(B) List any advisory, consultative, honorary or other part-time service or positions with federal, state, or local governments, not listed elsewhere.

<u>Name of Government Entity</u>	<u>Name of Position</u>	<u>Date Service Began</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate)	<u>Date Service Ended</u> (month/year) (check box if estimate) (check "present" box if still serving)	
None		Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Present <input type="checkbox"/>
		Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Present <input type="checkbox"/>
		Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Est <input type="checkbox"/>	Present <input type="checkbox"/>

**4. Honors and Awards**

List all scholarships, fellowships, honorary degrees, civilian service citations, military medals, academic or professional honors, honorary society memberships and any other special recognition for outstanding service or achievement.

Department of Health and Human Services FY 2012 Corporate Responsibility Award  
 Senior Executive Service Exceptional Performance Ratings – 2007-2012  
 Department of Veterans Affairs Distinguished Career Award – April 2007  
 Saint Augustine’s College – Academic Scholarship

**5. Memberships**

List all memberships that you have held in professional, social, business, fraternal, scholarly, civic, or charitable organizations in the last ten years.

Unless relevant to your nomination, you do NOT need to include memberships in charitable organizations available to the public as a result of a tax deductible donation of \$1,000 or less, Parent-Teacher Associations or other organizations connected to schools attended by your children, athletic clubs or teams, automobile support organizations (such as AAA), discounts clubs (such as Groupon or Sam’s Club), or affinity memberships/consumer clubs (such as frequent flyer memberships).

<u>Name of Organization</u>	<u>Dates of Your Membership</u> (You may approximate)	<u>Position(s) Held</u>
District of Columbia Bar Association	1983 – present	Member

American Bar Association	2010 – present	Member
American Health Lawyers Association	2008 – present	Member
American Association of Public Welfare Attorneys	2007 – present	Member
National Association of Women Judges	2006 – 2007	Member
American Judges Association	2005 – 2007	Member
Executive Women in Government	2006 – 2007	Member

**6. Political Activity**

(A) Have you ever been a candidate for or been elected or appointed to a political office?

No

<u>Name of Office</u>	<u>Elected/Appointed/ Candidate Only</u>	<u>Year(s) Election Held or Appointment Made</u>	<u>Term of Service (if applicable)</u>

**(B) List any offices held in or services rendered to a political party or election committee during the last ten years that you have not listed elsewhere.**

None

<u>Name of Party/Election Committee</u>	<u>Office/Services Rendered</u>	<u>Responsibilities</u>	<u>Dates of Service</u>

**(C) Itemize all individual political contributions of \$200 or more that you have made in the past five years to any individual, campaign organization, political party, political action committee, or similar entity. Please list each individual contribution and not the total amount contributed to the person or entity during the year.**

None

<u>Name of Recipient</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Year of Contribution</u>



**7. Publications**

**List the titles, publishers and dates of books, articles, reports or other published materials that you have written, including articles published on the Internet.**

None

<u>Title</u>	<u>Publisher</u>	<u>Date(s) of Publication</u>

## **8. Public Statements**

**(A) List any testimony, official statements or other communications relating to matters of public policy that you have issued or provided or that others presented on your behalf to public bodies or officials.** None

**(B) List any speeches or talks delivered by you, including commencement speeches, remarks, lectures, panel discussions, conferences, political speeches, and question-and-answer sessions. Include the dates and places where such speeches or talks were given.**

- September 19, 2004 – Speaker, Saint Augustine’s College 138<sup>th</sup> Fall Convocation, Raleigh NC
- October 2005 - Participant, Georgetown University Law Center Panel Discussion on Mentoring America’s Future Law Professionals, Washington, DC
- May 16, 2007 – Speaker, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Federally Employed Women Program, Washington, DC
- May 27, 2008 – Speaker, American Health Lawyers Association (AHLA) Long Term Care and the Law Conference, New Orleans, LA
- November 18, 2008 – Speaker, DHHS Emerging Leaders Program, Washington, DC
- February 25, 2009 – Speaker, AHLA Long Term Care and the Law Conference, Las Vegas, NV
- March 26, 2009 – Speaker, AHLA Institute on Medicare and Medicaid Payment Issues, Baltimore, MD
- October 22, 2009, Speaker, American Bar Association’s Administrative Adjudication Forum, Washington, DC
- March 25, 2010 - Speaker, AHLA Institute on Medicare and Medicaid Payment Issues, Baltimore, MD
- June 17, 2010 – Speaker, DHHS, Alternative Dispute Resolution Forum, Bethesda, MD
- July 27, 2010 – Speaker, DHHS, Office of Medicare Hearings and Appeals’ Judicial Education Symposium, Cleveland, OH
- October 19, 2010 – Speaker, AHLA Medicare Appeals Webinar, Washington, DC
- November 18, 2010 – Speaker, DHHS Emerging Leaders Program, Washington, DC
- March 31, 2011 - Speaker, AHLA Institute on Medicare and Medicaid Payment Issues, Baltimore, MD
- May 25, 2011 – Speaker, Elliot Hines Middle School Career Day, Washington, DC
- July 19, 2011 - Speaker, DHHS, Office of Medicare Hearings and Appeals’ Judicial Education Symposium, Arlington, VA
- June 11, 2012 – Speaker, DHHS, Office of Medicare Hearings and Appeals Senior Leadership Meeting, Washington, D.C.
- October 17, 2012 – Speaker, DHHS, Office of Medicare Hearings and Appeals Judicial Education Symposium, Arlington, VA

(C) List all interviews you have given to newspapers, magazines or other publications, and radio or television stations (including the dates of such interviews). None

**9. Agreements or Arrangements**

X See OGE Form 278. (If, for your nomination, you have completed an OGE Form 278 Executive Branch Personnel Public Financial Disclosure Report, you may check the box here to complete this section and then proceed to the next section.)

As of the date of filing your OGE Form 278, report your agreements or arrangements for: (1) continuing participation in an employee benefit plan (e.g. pension, 401k, deferred compensation); (2) continuation of payment by a former employer (including severance payments); (3) leaves of absence; and (4) future employment.

Provide information regarding any agreements or arrangements you have concerning (1) future employment; (2) a leave of absence during your period of Government service; (3) continuation of payments by a former employer other than the United States Government; and (4) continuing participation in an employee welfare or benefit plan maintained by a former employer other than United States Government retirement benefits.

<u>Status and Terms of Any Agreement or Arrangement</u>	<u>Parties</u>	<u>Date</u> (month/year)

**10. Lobbying**

In the past ten years, have you registered as a lobbyist? No  
 If so, please indicate the state, federal, or local bodies with which you have registered (e.g., House, Senate, California Secretary of State).

**11. Testifying Before the Congress**

(A) Do you agree to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Congress upon the request of such Committee? Yes

(B) Do you agree to provide such information as is requested by such a committee? Yes

[A letter from the Office of Government Ethics follows:]



United States  
**Office of Government Ethics**  
1201 New York Avenue, N.W., Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20005-3917

**APR 18 2013**

The Honorable Bernard Sanders  
Chairman  
Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In accordance with the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, I enclose a copy of the financial disclosure report filed by Constance B. Tobias, who has been nominated by President Obama for the position of Chairman of the Board of Veterans' Appeals, Department of Veterans Affairs.

We have reviewed the report and have obtained advice from the agency concerning any possible conflict in light of its functions and the nominee's proposed duties. Also enclosed is an ethics agreement outlining the actions that the nominee will undertake to avoid conflicts of interest. Unless a date for compliance is indicated in the ethics agreement, the nominee must fully comply within three months of confirmation with any action specified in the ethics agreement.

Based thereon, we believe that this nominee is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of interest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don W. Fox".

Don W. Fox  
Principal Deputy Director

Enclosures

[A letter from Constance B. Tobias to the Office of General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs follows:]

March 14, 2013

Mr. Walter A. Hall (023)  
Assistant General Counsel and  
Designated Agency Ethics Official  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Mr. Hall:

The purpose of this letter is to describe the steps that I will take to avoid any actual or apparent conflict of interest in the event that I am confirmed for the position of Chairman of the Board of Veterans' Appeals of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

As required by 18 U.S.C. § 208(a), I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter that has a direct and predictable effect on my financial interests or those of any person whose interests are imputed to me, unless I first obtain a written waiver, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(1), or qualify for a regulatory exemption, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(2). I understand that the interests of the following persons are imputed to me: any spouse or minor child of mine; any general partner of a partnership in which I am a limited or general partner; any organization in which I serve as officer, director, trustee, general partner or employee; and any person or organization with which I am negotiating or have an arrangement concerning prospective employment.

I have been advised that this ethics agreement will be posted publicly, consistent with 5 U.S.C. § 552, on the website of the U.S. Office of Government Ethics with other ethics agreements of Presidential nominees who file public financial disclosure reports.

Finally, I understand that as an appointee I am required to sign the Ethics Pledge (Exec. Order No. 13490) and that I will be bound by the requirements and restrictions therein in addition to the commitments I have made in this and any other ethics agreement.

Sincerely,



Constance Tobias

Chairman SANDERS. Thank very much, Ms. Tobias.

Let me start with Dr. Schwartz. Let me ask you the same question that I asked the previous panel and that is, we have a good health care system I think. You yourself experienced it. Mr. Gibson pointed out earlier and I think you have made the point that VA's population and its challenges are changing every day. That is one of the unique characteristics of VA, there is certainly not a static population that it deals with.

One of the crises that we face right now, and it is a huge challenge, is that a whole lot of men and women who come back from Iraq and Afghanistan come back with Traumatic Brain Injury.

They have come back with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, which we are talking about tens and tens and tens of thousands of people.

In your judgment, how is VA doing in responding to that very, very difficult challenge? What ideas do you have as to how they might improve their efforts?

Ms. SCHWARTZ. I believe that VA has made important strides in the last few years to accommodate especially some of the things that we are finding out on the battlefield injuries.

The Traumatic Brain Injury has always been part of military service. We are just now acknowledging it and addressing how to treat the people who are coming home with this.

From the Stateside—I am from the ones that deliver the service, so I truly believe that States bring a lot of resources to the table. Collectively, States spend \$9 billion a year to assist veterans across the Nation.

That is a vehicle that needs to be, those bridges need to be cultivated and enforced just because, just as we are relying so much on our citizen soldiers, the Guard and the Reserve, they are no longer on large bases and they no longer stay in the military health care facilities for long periods of time.

They come home and they come to small towns and large towns, and one of the things is that the accountability for the care of veterans is just as sharp at the State level as it is at the national level.

So, I would look forward to, as I mentioned in my testimony, working with other government agencies, our veterans service organizations, and communities to craft a network that actually can identify and address these people.

Chairman SANDERS. Let me ask you another question. This Committee has talked a lot about the need for much better efforts between VA and the DOD in terms of electronic medical records.

Do you have any thoughts on that?

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Yes, sir, I do. I too, was someone who was watching this. We are all disappointed that it did not materialize as we had expected.

But I do believe that Secretary Shinseki's leadership on this and the concept of this seamless medical record is definitely worth revisiting and taking a look at why did it fail.

I am not really sure I know the reason why it failed but I am vitally interested in seeing what happened and how we can make it work because it is the answer.

I myself—it took 3 years from the time of my accident before I even went for care at the VA. I live in a very rural part of Connecticut. My husband is self-employed. I had a 6-year-old daughter. That is happening over and over and over again across our great Nation today.

It is the pro forma and not the exception that it was in my time. But the point is, I was medically retired from the U.S. Air Force and the VA had no idea of who I was or where I was and I had no idea where VA was.

So, that medical record system is vital not only for the veterans today but for the services that we can provide for the future people who come to serve our Nation.

Chairman SANDERS. So, am I hearing that if confirmed—

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Yes.

Chairman SANDERS [continuing]. You are going to be vigorous in trying to improve what is now a rather poor situation.

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Yes, sir, I consider it to be the very top priority. I have met with my staff and they have had some wonderful ideas. But I promise you that this is a very vital interest of my own, not only for my people—

Chairman SANDERS. You are taking it personally?

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Actually, sir, I think that is probably what Senator Blumenthal was trying to tell you.

[Laughter.]

Chairman SANDERS. Well, that is why we needed Senator Blumenthal with that introduction.

Senator Blumenthal.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You have summarized in two or three words what I was trying to do in 5 minutes but thank you again, both of you, for your service to our Nation.

I think I want to second what the Chairman raised about the necessity for a truly interoperable and seamless system of electronic medical records. I think that has to be a priority for you, for Mr. Gibson, for the entire VA leadership. But I also want to raise two other issues.

One, a general one, which you have raised, and I want to suggest to both of you speaking truth to power is important in the Federal Government just as it is in the State government. I know from your record you have never been hesitant about speaking truth to power and I assume that you would continue to do so, both of you, in the roles that you are going to now have.

Speaking truth to power, of course, means being a critic where necessary and your freedom to do so publicly may be somewhat constrained but I hope that you would speak truth to power within the halls of the VA and publicly, if necessary. I assume you would do so.

Ms. SCHWARTZ. If I am confirmed, you know that is one of my mantras and that I do believe that it is an opportune time at VA right now because of the leadership of Secretary Shinseki.

So, I look forward to being a force to improve the system and also I hope that I will bring the viewpoint of the States to the discussions and the halls of VA because many of our State directors do wonderful work and they are willing partners.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. I would agree with you as a former State official that the States are really pioneering and spearheading some of the most innovative and important work in this area.

Ms. Tobias, do you have any comment on the general issue of speaking truth or more specifically how we are going to deal with the backlog of appeals we have?

Ms. TOBIAS. Well, speaking truth to power certainly has never been a problem for me. I think that it is important that we have all views, dissenting views, as we move forward to tackle some of the more difficult issues facing us.

As far as the backlog, I view the claims and appeals backlog as an integrated benefits system to our veterans. We really cannot separate claims from appeals. It is a complex challenge, and there

is no single solution to that problem. I think that it will take focus on what you have already heard today: people, processes, and technologies.

I have had some success at HHS in focusing on training people, bringing in differing views, bringing in people with different experiences to help us look at our work differently, to working very hard at looking at our practices, our workflow, how we manage our work but also what technology can bring to our work.

We have been working on an electronic record, and I think there is huge potential in VA to gain some efficiencies there helping with timeliness but also administrative processing and handling and space storage.

So, I think that it is a combination of ideas that will be necessary to address the backlog and I look forward to diving right in, if confirmed.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I am going to close with just a couple of comments because I have to go back to a Judiciary Committee hearing.

Your mention of Traumatic Brain Injury and the related issue of Post Traumatic Stress are very important in my view, that both the Department of Defense and the VA give the priority to these issues they deserve.

The State of Connecticut was involved recently with a veteran of the Vietnam war, John Shepard, Jr., who was discharged with a less than honorable discharge, suffered from homelessness and unemployment for four decades as a result.

His case was championed by the Yale Legal Services Clinic. I know you are familiar with the case, and I was very supportive and involved in it.

Fortunately, just within the past week his less than honorable discharge was changed by the U.S. Army to an honorable discharge; a tremendous victory for him but also hopefully as a precedent for revisiting some of the discharges and some of the policies that were set before this Nation recognized Post Traumatic Stress and diagnosed and treated it. It was not recognized until the 1980s.

So, many of the veterans of the Vietnam era may have suffered from it and we need to redress that injustice and misfortune for them and for our Nation because they can and could have done even more with their lives if they had been given the right diagnosis and treatment at the time that it was relevant.

So, I am hoping—

Chairman SANDERS. You raise an issue that this Committee is going to look at. That is a complicated issue but it is a very important issue and the point that the Senator is making, there were a lot of people who were discharged, received their dishonorable discharge or less than honorable discharge for reasons that I think we understand better today than we did then.

Then what happens to these people and what kind of care they are able to get because they do not have that honorable discharge is a serious issue.

Thanks for raising it.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.



Chairman SANDERS. Ms. Tobias, let me just ask you a question or two. You are being nominated for a very difficult job. If confirmed, you will assume one of the toughest jobs at the VA.

I cannot underscore enough the level of frustration veterans have with VA's disability claims system and especially the amount of time it takes to receive a decision on an appeal.

Will you commit, on the record, to providing this Committee with a plan within your first 45 days on the job on how you intend to cut the amount of time it takes to give a veteran a correct answer on an appeal? Is that something you can commit to?

Ms. TOBIAS. Well, I certainly will try. I will commit to that.

Chairman SANDERS. We are asking you for the plan.

Ms. TOBIAS. The plan.

Chairman SANDERS. Not to solve all the problems by that time. Just the plan on how you are going to go forward.

[Laughter.]

Ms. TOBIAS. All right.

Chairman SANDERS. Ms. Tobias, if confirmed, I would like to know how you will approach employee relations, for example, a significant number of board employees are members of a bargaining unit. How would you solicit input from your employees and union representatives?

Ms. TOBIAS. I have had experience working with employees in a bargaining unit. Most employees at the Departmental Appeals Board are part of a bargaining unit.

My approach is open. The current bargaining unit president and I meet regularly and informally in the halls. I believe that our employees, it is important that our employees feel that they are being treated fairly in the workplace, that they are being treated with respect in the workplace, and that when the relationship is good, then we can all focus on the job of serving veterans, reducing the processing time, trying to issue as many decisions as we can. So, I am looking forward to, if confirmed, an open, cooperative process. That has been my experience at HHS.

Chairman SANDERS. OK. All right. Those are my questions.

Let me thank Sloan Gibson, Dr. Schwartz, and Ms. Tobias for being with us today and for answering our questions. Most importantly, I thank all of you for your desire to serve our Nation's veterans and for the work that you have already done for our country.

The importance of these nominations cannot be stressed enough. All of these jobs are enormously important. The positions you have been selected to undertake play an integral role in approving the benefits and services that we provide those who put their lives on the line to defend our country.

I look forward to working with Ranking Member Burr and other Members of this Committee on the disposition of your nominations. Thank you again for being here. This hearing is now adjourned.

[Whereon, at 11:13 a.m., the Committee was adjourned.]



## A P P E N D I X

STATEMENT OF RICHARD REED, NSO, VETERAN SERVICE DIRECTOR,  
VERMONT OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS IN SUPPORT OF LINDA S. SCHWARTZ



**STATE OF VERMONT**  
**OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
118 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05620-4401  
(802) 828-3379

November 7, 2013

Senator Bernie Sanders

Re: Nomination of Linda Schwartz for Asst. Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Policy and Planning

Dear Senator Sanders,

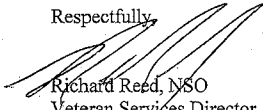
I am very pleased to see that President Obama has nominated my friend and mentor, Linda Schwartz to be the Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Policy and Planning. I have known Linda professionally for nearly eight years, and in that time have also come to consider her a friend.

In 2006, Linda invited Vermont to send its lone service officer to join the Connecticut state service officers in advanced training. She and her service personnel welcomed me and admitted me to training that previously had only been provided to Connecticut personnel. Since that time, I have had many opportunities to observe Linda in action, particularly at the national level in the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs. She has been a constant and stalwart advocate for veterans in her state and nationwide. Last February she arrived late to the organization's winter conference, not so much because the heavy snow storm that struck Connecticut impeded her travel, but because she needed to be sure that the veterans who live in the state's veterans home in Rocky Hill were safe, and the staff who cared for them were able to get in and out to assure continuity of care and treatment.

This spring, the state directors for the Northeast region met in West Point. As our regional president, Linda arranged an intensive and worthwhile agenda, giving each of us, even the smaller states equal footing and opportunity to speak and contribute. Throughout her years of advocacy for veterans she has not only earned the reputation of a fighter, but also of a wise negotiator, caregiver and supporter of the rest of us who toil in the same trenches.

I believe that Linda will bring much needed practical experience to the VA. She brings the knowledge of national, regional, state and individual advocacy and support for veterans that too often seem to be absent on Vermont Avenue. I urge you to support her nomination.

Respectfully,

  
Richard Reed, NSO  
Veteran Services Director  
VT Office of Veterans Affairs

LETTER FROM CATHERINE L. GILLIS, PhD, RN, FAAN, DEAN AND HELENE FULD  
HEALTH TRUST PROFESSOR OF NURSING, VICE CHANCELLOR FOR NURSING AFFAIRS,  
DUKE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF NURSING IN SUPPORT OF LINDA S. SCHWARTZ

10/30/2013 14:10 FAX 9196849414

Duke School of Nursing

0001/0002



DUKE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF NURSING

Catherine L. Gilliss, PhD, RN, FAAN  
Dean and Helene Fuld Health Trust Professor of Nursing  
Vice Chancellor for Nursing Affairs

October 30, 2013

The Honorable Bernard Sanders, Chairman  
U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
412 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Via FACSIMILE: 202-224-9575 to the attention of Dahlia Melendez

Dear Chairman Sanders,

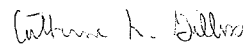
On the morning of November 6, 2013, you will meet my long-time colleague, *Linda S. Schwartz*, DrPH, RN, FAAN, who will come before the Veterans Affairs Committee as the nominee for *Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Policy and Planning*. As someone who has known Dr. Schwartz for almost twenty years, I want you to know that I believe she is uncommonly well qualified for this position. You might say she has been preparing for this opportunity all of her life without knowing it.

Dr. Schwartz served in the Vietnam era as a flight nurse and was injured in a flight accident. She returned to Connecticut where she earned a Master of Science in Nursing degree from Yale (1984) and later earned her Doctor of Public Health from the Yale School of Medicine (1998). During the period I served as Dean of Yale's School of Nursing, she held a faculty appointment and conducted research on the long-term effects of Agent Orange. She left the faculty in 2003, when Connecticut's Governor invited her to accept the position of Commissioner of Veterans Affairs. Since that time she has ably and creatively led in the identification and delivery of needed services for the veterans in the state of Connecticut, served as President of the National Commissioners Organization, and has continued to advocate for veterans regionally and nationally. Her history of service is long and deep, and she understands the details from the veteran's perspective as well as the need for data that will help guide us toward solutions.

The list of awards and recognitions amassed by Dr. Schwartz is extensive, but the real story lies in the appreciation expressed by the variety of groups who have honored her: veterans' groups, military, governments, women, nursing honorary associations, Yale University, and the Red Cross. She is "of the people and for the people" and able to speak to a broad constituency.

I cannot imagine a more qualified candidate, one who knows the story of the veteran and is able to understand and use data to develop sound and sensitive policies that address the pressing needs of our nation's veterans.

Sincerely,



Catherine Lynch Gilliss

Cc: The Honorable Richard Blumenthal (via facsimile to 202-224-9673)

## LETTER FROM TRI-COUNCIL FOR NURSING IN SUPPORT OF LINDA S. SCHWARTZ

**Tri-Council for Nursing**

November 5, 2013

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the Tri-Council for Nursing, a long standing nursing alliance focused on leadership and excellence in the nursing profession, we urge your support of Linda Spoonster Schwartz, DrPH, MSN, RN, USAF (Ret) to serve as the Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Policy and Planning. Dr. Schwartz will appear before the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs for her confirmation hearing on November 6, 2013.

Dr. Schwartz brings a vast wealth of knowledge to the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA). She has a long history of involvement in nursing and veteran organizations. She is an advocate and activist who devoted her nursing practice to healing the wounds of war and improving the lives of America's 24 million veterans. Her perspectives as a nurse and veteran have earned her the respect and trust of veterans, congressional leaders and government officials alike.

Most importantly, she served 16 years in the United States Air Force both on active duty and as a reservist (1967-1986). Dr. Schwartz has served as Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Veterans' Affairs since 2003. She is presently the Vice President and Chairman of Health Care for the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs. In 2008 the governor of Connecticut tapped her to chair the Connecticut Veterans Memorial Foundation. In 2005 she applied for and received a \$22 million matching grant from the VA to construct the John L. Levitov Health Center. Dedicated in 2008, this center provides care to 125 veterans with chronic disease. Dr. Schwartz received a Masters in Nursing from Yale and holds a Doctorate in Public Health from the Yale School of Medicine.

On behalf of our nurse members around the country, we strongly believe that Dr. Schwartz's expertise and experience will serve the VA well and urge her confirmation.

Sincerely yours,

Jane Kirschling, PhD, RN, FAAN  
President  
Geraldine Bednash, PhD, RN, FAAN  
Chief Executive Officer  
**American Association of Colleges of Nursing**

Karen Daley, PhD, MPH, RN, FAAN  
President  
Marla J. Weston, PhD, RN, FAAN  
Chief Executive Officer  
**American Nurses Association**

Michelle Janney, PhD, RN, NEA-BC  
President  
Pamela A. Thompson, MS, RN, FAAN  
Chief Executive Officer  
**American Organization of Nurse Executives**

Marsha Howell Adams, PhD, RN, CNE, ANEF  
President  
Beverly Malone, PhD, RN, FAAN  
Chief Executive Officer  
**National League for Nursing**

American Association of Colleges of Nursing  
One Dupont Circle, NW  
Suite 530  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-463-6930  
Fax 202-785-8320  
www.aacn.nche.edu

American Nurses Association  
8815 Georgia Avenue  
Suite 400  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3492  
301-628-5012  
Fax 301-628-5344  
www.nursingworld.org

American Organization of Nurse Executives  
325 Seventh Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20004  
202-626-2240  
Fax 202-638-5499  
www.aone.org

National League for Nursing  
2600 Virginia Avenue, NW  
Eighth Floor  
Washington, DC 20037  
800-669-1636  
www.nln.org

