

**Testimony**

**Of**

**John K. Lopez, SDV, Chairman  
Association for Service Disabled Veterans**

**To**

**The Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
U.S. House of Representatives**

**Thursday, 16 February 2006  
Room 334, Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC**

Good morning Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member and Members of the Committee.

Thank you for your attention and without objection, I shall submit a written statement for the record and summarize my testimony for the Committee.

It has been nearly six (6) years since the U.S. Congress first provided support for the service disabled and prisoner of war veteran enterprise initiative, by enacting P.L. 106-50 and P.L. 108-183.

The Administration followed that direction by invoking President Executive Order 13360, directing aggressive and immediate implementation of those laws and specifying actions to be taken.

Those activities took place in October 2004 and since that time the frustration has continued.

For example; when P.L. 106-50 was enacted the Federal Acquisition Regulatory Council (FAR) contended that the main intent of the legislation was unclear and therefore the required establishment of a program for service disabled veterans (SDV) did not exist.

**Subsequently, the legislated intent of the U.S. Congress has been variously interpreted by regulators due to the necessity for inserting and parsing of the required language, statements and reference to existing regulations and public laws.**

This bureaucratic obfuscation has had the effect of confusing and impeding the effort to increase the participation of the service disabled veteran (SDV) in government procurement and contracting opportunities.

H.R. 3082 “The Veteran Owned Small Business Promotion Act” clarifies and reemphasizes the intent of the U.S. Congress. The intent is a splendid example of the concern and focus of the Committee’s response to the veteran’s need for rehabilitation and transition assistance.

H.R. 3082 gives specific authority to the Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) to confirm the eligibility of service disabled veteran businesses and to accept direct responsibility for the provision of benefit to the veteran. Especially, the service disabled veteran. It puts the task to that agency specifically established for the purpose of serving “those who have borne the battle”.

Included is concern for the total family.

The age old adage that; "BESIDE EVERY SUCCESSFUL MAN STANDS A WOMAN"; pales in significance when compared to the role of the wives', mothers', sisters' and daughters' who care for those service disabled and prisoner of war veterans (SDV) that are enhancing their **REHABILITATION** through the ownership and management of a smaller business (SDVE).

Besides, the enormous burden of caring for the SDV's life long disabilities, incurred in sacrifice for the well being of all the free world, these women are vested participants in the daily management of the SDV enterprise. Without their participation the SDVE is surely doomed to failure.

For too long has this extraordinary contribution gone unrecognized and the unique investment of Vested Women (VW) gone uncompensated.

Present legal interpretation states that the legal entitlement of the SDVE ceases when the SDV owner dies or is incapacitated, leaving the significantly invested VW with a practically totally devalued business. The actual VW role as a defacto partner and enabling force in the enterprise is discarded.

This is an unacceptable disposition of the accomplishments of the SDV and the sacrifice of the VW. Disgracing the responsibility of the nation for the sacrifices of the veterans' unique initiative. H.R. 3082 will alleviate this injustice and provide for SDV business succession.

In the words of one Vested Woman (VW); **"WOMEN HAVE STOOD BY TOO LONG WHILE OUR DISABLED VETERAN LOVED ONES**

**HAVE TAKEN ABUSE AND DISRESPECT FOR THEIR SACRIFICE FOR THIS NATION WHILE THEY STRUGGLE WITH REHABILITATION.**

**THAT WILL NOW STOP!!"**

It is estimated that over 2,500,000 women are integral in the operation of SDVE and over 15,000,000 in all veteran owned business.

**H.R. 3082 also clarifies the misconception that Veterans Entrepreneurship, and the proposed act, are a socioeconomic development initiative or a cultural inequity panacea.**

H.R. 3082 is a specified contribution to that continuing obligation of our nation to **REHABILITATE** those veterans that sacrifice for our nations security and prosperity.

**THE SERVICE DISABLED VETERANS GOVERNMENT SERVICE INCURRED MISERY IS UNIQUE!**

There is no justification for requiring that service disabled veteran indemnification and rehabilitation be adjusted to the conduct of any other socio-economic program.

Future generations of American military heroes will be forever indebted to the Congress, and especially the 109th Congress, for their commitment to honor and support those killed, maimed, and tortured in the continuing struggle to provide security and prosperity for the people of the world.

Those Iraqi-Afghanistan veterans returning from harms way are experiencing a far different outreach from others who have served, and that is a tribute to the conscience of the Members of the U.S. Congress.

The 25 million military veterans of our nation thank the Chairman and Ranking Members of the Committee and Subcommittees, **the 500 thousand grandmothers, 12 million wives and 6 million granddaughters that are**

**direct stakeholders and beneficiaries of veteran's entrepreneurial investment and the 30 million employees of veteran enterprises (SDVE),** thank the U.S. Congress for the compassionate and responsible leadership that they have demonstrated in the development of veterans entrepreneurship.

We ask that the Congress enact H.R. 3082 expeditiously and that the Congress stay acutely engaged in a process of verifying that the intent of veteran entrepreneurship development legislation is implemented!

Thank you for your attention. I would be pleased to answer any questions the Members may have.