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Testimony before the Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee

**Senate Concurrent Resolution 8**

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Chairman Johnson, Vice Chairman Wilson, Ranking Member Craig and members of the Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee, thank you for allowing me to stand before you today and offer proponent testimony on Senate Concurrent Resolution Number 8.

I am David Root, a US Navy Veteran of the Vietnam War. I am a State Legislative Chairman for the Department of Ohio Veterans of Foreign Wars and a past State Commander.

In Senator Schaffer's testimony last month he pointed out several facts that illustrated the need for congress to take action that would reduce the time it takes for the Veterans Administration to process a veteran's claim. The SCR 8 points out that the "Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017," which became law in August Of 2017 has not accomplished what it was intended to do because the Department of Veterans Affairs has failed to comply.

Sadly, these are not new issues for the veterans of our country. Wait times and backlogs within the VA system have been an issue for years. The VFW and others Veteran Service Organizations have all urged Congress to tackle the problem. This week members of the American Legion are in Washington walking the halls of congress and talking with legislators on many topics. Wait times will be one of those topics. Next week I will be DC with the VFW doing the same thing. It is something I have been doing every year since 2011. After the VFW will be AMVETS and then DAV in the next week. VA wait times and backlogs will be an issue we will all address, just as we have every year.

I want to thank Senator Schaffer for sponsoring this resolution on behalf of veterans everywhere. The VSOs appreciate any help we can get when we are dealing with the bureaucracy and red tap of the US Congress and the unwillingness of the Department of Veterans Affairs to implement and oversee anything that will be a benefit for deserving veterans. I support SCR 8 and ask that you favorably pass it out of committee and encourage your colleagues in the senate to pass it as well.

I will close with a reminder that the times mentioned by Senator Schaffer to complete disability-related claims were average times. The completion times in early 2023 were 102 days –as an average. And at the end of 2023 it was up to 149 days –again, the average. I submitted a claim for tinnitus and hearing loss and am still waiting for the VA to tell me if I get it or not. I filed that claim on June 29th of last year. Two hundred forty three days ago. The VA now classifies me as a backlog.

Thank you Chairman Johnson and members of the Committee for the opportunity to speak in support of Senate Concurrent Resolution Number 8. I will be happy to answer any questions the committee might have.