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Testimony before the Senate Armed Services, Veteran Affairs and Public Safety Committee

**Senate Resolution 22**

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Chairman Johnson, Vice Chairman Wilson, Ranking Member Weinstein and members of the Senate Armed Services, Veteran Affairs and Public Safety Committee, thank you for allowing me to stand before you today and offer proponent testimony on Senate Resolution 22.

I am David Root, a US Navy Veteran of the Vietnam War. I am a Past State Commander for the Department of Ohio Veterans of Foreign Wars and I am currently serving my fourth year as a State Legislative Chairman.

In Senator Schaffer's testimony last week 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 SR 22 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 and 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 hundreds of other VFW members doing the same thing. It is something the VFW has been doing since the organization began back in 1899 right here in this very city. I have been making the annual trip to the Hill for the past 14 years. VA wait times and backlogs will be an issue that we will address, just as we do 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 SR 22 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 time last November was 139 days and 146 at the end of last month. Those are the average times. There are many veterans who are having to wait 200 or more days.

Thank you Chairman Johnson and members of the Committee for the opportunity to speak in support of Senate Resolution 22. I will try to answer any questions the committee might have.