



Congressman Joe Heck
Statement for the Record
Financial Services Subcommittee:
Insurance, Housing and Community Development
September 14, 2012

I would like to thank Chairwoman Biggert and Ranking Member Gutierrez for inviting me to participate in today's hearing and for allowing me to make a brief opening statement. Ending veteran homelessness is a critically important issue that deserves the focused attention of this Congress. In my state of Nevada, we have more than fourteen hundred veterans on the street at any given time. As such, I commend Secretary Shinseki for prioritizing this issue and for working to end homelessness for our veterans by 2015. However, achieving this laudable goal requires a focused collaborative effort between all federal, state and local agencies to ensure that the resources we provide are used in an efficient and cost effective manner. Furthermore, we need to seek out and establish partnerships with non-profits and community and faith-based organizations already providing programs and services to homeless veterans so that we can leverage their experience and expertise in these areas.

One such program is Veteran's Village located in Las Vegas. Veteran's Village, founded by one of today's witnesses, Dr. Arnold Stalk, is a converted hotel that serves as a transitional housing facility to shelter veterans while they get back on their feet. In addition to providing housing, Veteran's Village offers educational opportunities, employment and medical services, mental health counseling and recreational and fitness programs. This program is a perfect example of what can be accomplished when the public and private sector collaborate.

I would also like to take just a moment to thank the members of the Financial Services Committee for voting unanimously to pass my bill HR 6361, the Vulnerable Veterans Housing

Reform Act out of Committee on Wednesday. This bill would remove an unnecessary barrier that prevents our disabled wartime veterans from receiving the housing assistance they so critically need. A special thank you goes out to the staffs of this subcommittee, who have worked diligently to get HR 6361 through the committee. I sincerely appreciate your efforts on behalf our nation's veterans.

Finally, I want recognize my colleague from Texas, Representative Al Green for his work to assist our low income disabled veterans. His bill, the Housing Assistance for Veterans Act of 2012, or HAVEN Act, of which I am a proud co-sponsor and which will be examined today, would establish a pilot program to provide grants to qualified non-profit organizations for the purpose of rehabilitating and modifying homes for low income disabled vets. This program would provide a critical service to our nation's heroes and ensure that they have quality and accessible housing and I would urge my colleagues to support this initiative. Again thank you for allowing me to participate and I look forward to our witness' testimony.