

Madame Chair and Members. My name is Jennifer Havlick, and I am the American Legion Department of Minnesota Commander. I was elected by thousands of Legionnaires across this state to raise my voice for them but also all veterans and I plan to do that today.

We're asking for a veterans and military affairs omnibus bill that is separate and not attached to any other legislation. The Minnesota Legislature delivered that for us last year, and the governor signed it into law. The American Legion was present on the capitol grounds to commemorate the day with other major veterans service organizations and the lawmakers who were instrumental in making it happen. So today I ask you to think back to that day, a day when we celebrated the setting aside of partisan differences to do the right thing for veterans.

I'd also like to outline a few key things that are very important to our members, contained in HF 1937.

- More than \$4M for state veteran cemeteries
- Mental health and suicide prevention measures such as
  - More than \$1M for the Counseling and Case Management Outreach Referral and Education program
  - Half a million in funding each year for the LinkVet Call Center

- Unprecedented levels of funding to house veterans experiencing homelessness
  - \$1.4M for the Homeless Veterans and Soar Program
  - More than \$11M over the biennium to the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans, an organization whose mission is to end veteran homelessness
  - More than \$5M for the veteran homelessness initiative over the biennium

We also think the more than \$700,000 in funding for the Recently Separated Veterans program will be crucial to reaching veterans at times when providing information about resources has great potential to make a difference in the rest of their lives. The bill contains almost \$200 million for veterans health care to operate veterans homes and provide health navigation to veterans for community care.

Once again, I am asking you not to combine HF 1937 with any other legislation. Our veterans sacrificed greatly for this country, for you, for us all. The least we can do is take care of them with dignity and respect and not do them a disservice by dragging them into trading and partisan debates. Thank you.