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**STATEMENT OF
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NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES SENATE
LEGISLATIVE HEARING
February 4, 2026**

Chairman Moran, Ranking Member Blumenthal, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of DAV (Disabled American Veterans) and our nearly one million members, thank you for the opportunity to add our support to four important bills that collectively strengthen the Department of Veterans Affairs' ability to restore independence, autonomy and quality of life for service-disabled veterans.

In addition to our role as a congressionally chartered veterans service organization and leading policy advocate, DAV fills critical gaps in care and access through our nationwide Voluntary Services program. DAV volunteers provide millions of hours of service each year in VA medical centers, outpatient clinics, state veterans homes and community settings, supporting transportation, recreational therapy—including adaptive sports—peer engagement and non-clinical assistance that complements VA health care and rehabilitation services. These on-the-ground experiences directly inform DAV's policy positions and underscore the practical impact of the legislation before the Committee.

We appreciate the Committee's commitment to addressing the pressing issues faced by service-disabled veterans and thank you for your thoughtful consideration of these four significant pieces of legislation. Collectively, these measures acknowledge that rehabilitation extends beyond clinical treatment. True rehabilitation encompasses restoring function, dignity, mobility and the ability to participate fully in everyday life—which is why access to innovative prosthetic technology and adaptive recreational opportunities is so critical.

Each bill on today's agenda targets specific barriers that hinder service-disabled veterans within their homes and communities and during recreational activities. Enactment of these bills would directly support DAV's mission to empower veterans, enabling them to achieve their highest possible level of independence.

S. 1644, the Autonomy for Disabled Veterans Act, would strengthen and modernize the VA's Home Improvements and Structural Alterations (HISA) program. The bill increases the maximum benefit amounts for home modifications to \$6,800 for veterans who applied before enactment and \$10,000 for those applying after, and

ensures these amounts keep pace with real-world construction costs by tying future increases to a residential construction cost index, adjusted annually.

We support S. 1644, based on DAV Resolution No. 127, which calls for updating statutory benefit caps to reflect the true cost of accessible home modifications and the evolving needs of severely disabled veterans. DAV volunteers regularly encounter veterans whose recovery and independence are limited not by medical care, but by inaccessible living environments. Unsafe housing conditions can delay hospital discharge, restrict mobility and increase the risk of injury.

By modernizing and indexing the HISA benefit, this bill helps ensure that clinical gains made in VA facilities translate into safe, sustainable independence at home. It addresses the long-standing gap between outdated benefit caps and the actual cost of necessary modifications, helping veterans remain in their homes and communities rather than being forced into institutional care. The bill limits the number of HISA grants to three per veteran, while preserving flexibility for meaningful, life-changing adaptations.

This targeted, responsible enhancement promotes autonomy, supports family and community engagement and reduces long-term dependency and costs. DAV believes S. 1644 is a critical step toward ensuring that severely disabled veterans have the resources they need for safe, independent living, and encourages Congress to advance this legislation to better support those who have served.

S. 1726, the Automotive Support Services to Improve Safe Transportation (ASSIST) Act of 2025, would explicitly clarify that the VA must provide a comprehensive range of medically necessary automobile adaptations as part of its medical services. These adaptations—including ramp and kneeling systems, mobility lifts, accessible seating and modifications for safe ingress and egress—are essential for veterans whose service-connected disabilities impair their ability to operate a vehicle safely.

We support S. 1726, based on DAV Resolution No. 448, because it addresses the real-world barriers veterans face to independence—not just from disability, but from a lack of safe, accessible transportation. By clearly defining eligible vehicle adaptations, the bill eliminates uncertainty and inconsistent VA interpretations that can delay or deny critical mobility supports, ensuring veterans can access medical care, employment and community life.

While DAV's volunteer transportation network is a vital resource to hundreds of thousands of disabled veterans, this legislation will provide many of them greater independence by allowing them to travel on their own terms. The ASSIST Act would help reduce reliance on volunteer transport and empower veterans to reclaim autonomy over their daily lives.

DAV believes that enacting S. 1726 is an important step toward ensuring veterans have the mobility and financial stability they deserve, and encourages Congress to advance this legislation to better support those who have served.

S. 2981, the Veterans Prosthetics Advancement and Reform Act, addresses a critical need for transparency, consistency and accountability in the VA prosthetics and rehabilitative services. We support this legislation, based on DAV Resolution No. 97, which calls for robust funding, innovation and equitable access in VA Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Services.

Service-disabled veterans too often face confusion and frustration when seeking prosthetic approvals, especially when eligibility or available items vary from one VA facility or region to another. By establishing a comprehensive Prosthetic and Rehabilitative Items and Services Formulary—developed with input from veterans and the public—this bill would bring much-needed clarity to both veterans and clinicians. The Formulary will be accessible at all VA facilities and online, updated periodically, and include a transparent process for requesting items not currently listed, with a mechanism to review and potentially add frequently requested items.

DAV regularly assists service-disabled veterans in navigating the VA health system, including understanding prosthetic options and resolving access challenges that arise from inconsistent practices between facilities. The absence of a clear, standardized formulary creates avoidable confusion for veterans to navigate a complex system. By establishing a clear Prosthetic and Rehabilitative Items and Services Formulary, S. 2981 would help close these systemic gaps.

Importantly, the bill preserves clinical judgment by allowing for medically necessary items not listed on the Formulary, while also creating a feedback loop to evaluate and potentially incorporate frequently requested items. This approach balances the need for standardization with the flexibility to address individual medical needs, mirroring best practices already used within VA's Pharmacy Benefits Management system. The bill also authorizes the VA Secretary to enter into contracts and provide training to ensure effective implementation.

S. 2981 is a targeted, responsible reform that will make VA prosthetic and rehabilitative benefits more understandable, accessible and equitable—without sacrificing innovation or responsiveness to individual veterans' needs. By establishing a transparent, evidence-based Formulary and preserving clinical flexibility, this legislation will help ensure that all veterans have timely access to the prosthetic and rehabilitative care they need to live independently and with dignity. DAV believes S. 2981 is an important step forward and encourages Congress to advance this bill to better support those who have served.

S. 3138, the Veterans Supporting Prosthetics Opportunities and Recreational Therapy (SPORT) Act, would require VA to include adaptive prostheses and terminal devices for sports and recreational activities within the VA's definition of medical

services. This clarification ensures that veterans can access prosthetic devices not only for daily living but also for participation in athletic and recreational pursuits—key components of physical rehabilitation, mental health recovery and social reintegration.

We support this legislation in accordance with DAV Resolution No. 97, which calls for funding, innovation and equitable access in VA Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Services. By removing ambiguity in the law, S. 3138 addresses inconsistent access to sport-specific prosthetics across the VA system and reinforces the clinical value of adaptive sports in veterans' recovery and long-term well-being. For service-disabled veterans, adaptive sports are not recreational luxuries—they are clinically recognized tools that improve mobility, reduce isolation and restore confidence.

DAV has long supported adaptive sports programs and has seen firsthand how participation in these events provides transformative physical and social benefits. For example, the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, which DAV co-presents with VA, brings together more than 350 veterans each year to participate in Alpine and Nordic skiing, sled hockey and other adaptive sports. Similarly, the National Disabled Veterans Golf Clinic, which we also co-present, serves more than 200 veterans annually, pairing them with “golf buddies” who assist them in adaptive golf activities and foster long-term relationships, confidence, and rehabilitation beyond the clinic itself. Through these and other community-based events, thousands of veterans have benefited from opportunities to test and refine adaptive prosthetics in real-world settings, rebuild physical conditioning and reconnect socially with peers and their communities.

DAV's voluntary services and adaptive sports programs demonstrate how access to appropriate prosthetic devices and adaptive programs directly improves long-term outcomes. Volunteers working alongside VA recreational therapy programs routinely see veterans regain confidence, reduce isolation, and re-engage socially. When access to sport-specific prosthetics is inconsistent or delayed, volunteers must step in to keep veterans motivated and engaged in their rehabilitation. This legislation would address these gaps by ensuring timely access to adaptive equipment, reducing reliance on volunteers and supporting better outcomes in adaptive sports participation.

S. 3138 broadens the scope of existing VA benefits, aligning with efforts to enhance quality of life and promote holistic rehabilitation for veterans. DAV believes this legislation is a vital step toward ensuring that all veterans have the opportunity to achieve their fullest potential through access to adaptive prosthetic technology and recreational therapy.

In closing, DAV appreciates the Committee's leadership in advancing legislation that recognizes rehabilitation as a lifelong process and stands ready to work with Congress and the VA to ensure successful implementation.