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COMMITTEE ON
WAYS AND MEANS

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND
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The Honorable Ike Skelton
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2120 RHOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Skelton:

As the Member of Congress representing the new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) in Bethesda, MD, I share your commitment to building a world class medical facility for our nation's wounded warriors and write to commend you and the committee for convening today's hearing entitled "The New Walter Reed: Are We on the Right Track?"

As you know, the consolidation of the Walter Reed Army Medical Center and the National Naval Medical Center into the new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center was mandated by the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process. Since that time, many dedicated individuals both inside and outside the Department of Defense have been working diligently to make the transition to the new facility a success.

Consistent with that objective, as well as Congress' oversight responsibilities, the 2008 Defense Authorization bill required the Secretary of Defense to develop a transition plan with sufficient resources to ensure no degradation of patient care and no net loss of capacity at the consolidated installation. The 2009 Defense Authorization bill went further to mandate an independent review of the design plans for the future facility, and the 2010 Defense Authorization bill enacted into law earlier this year called for the creation of a detailed master plan to provide world class military medical facilities across the National Capital Region.

Notwithstanding these efforts, the "Achieving World Class" report released by the National Capital Region Base Realignment and Closure Health Systems Advisory Subcommittee of the Defense Health Board in May of this year concluded that "the current plans for the WRNMMC are not those of a world class medical facility." Furthermore, issues related to traffic congestion and community impacts must be more fully addressed if we are to declare this relocation a success. We will be doing a disservice to our wounded warriors, their families and the medical personnel that assist them if they are unable to access the facility because of gridlock.

It is my hope that today's hearing will give Congress, the Department of Defense and all other stakeholders an opportunity to take stock of the work done to date, identify and eliminate any impediments to the progress we know we must make, and recommit to building the world class military medical facility the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center can and must be.

Sincerely,



Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress