

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 19, 2013

The Honorable Bernard Sanders
Chairman
Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
412 Russell Senate Building
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
412 Russell Senate Building
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Sanders and Ranking Member Burr:

We write today to share our strong support for the nomination of Dr. Linda Spoonster Schwartz as Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Policy and Planning, Department of Veterans Affairs. We have been fortunate to work closely with Linda both in Washington and in Connecticut, and can personally attest to the dedication she has for all those who have worn our nation's uniform.

First appointed as the Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs in 2003 as the first woman to head this important department, Dr. Schwartz has worked tirelessly to help our state's veterans connect with the care, benefits and services they deserve. She led a major expansion of the state's veterans home in Rocky Hill that will improve care for our state's neediest veterans – a multi-year effort that required securing both state and federal funding support. Dr. Schwartz has also worked to reduce veterans homelessness, expand access to supportive services, and has led numerous “Stand Down” events to provide critical support to veterans in need. Even before taking office as Commissioner, Dr. Schwartz had an impressive career as a nurse and advocate for veterans, and has worked with a wide variety of stakeholders and earned the trust of veterans, Congressional leaders and government officials.

A veteran of the Air Force who was injured in an aircraft accident while serving as a flight nurse, Dr. Schwartz knows firsthand the often daunting challenges that veterans face in accessing their health care. In caring for veterans in my district and across the state of Connecticut, Dr. Schwartz has been a partner, a resource, and a trusted advocate. Beyond her long list of qualifications and experience in healing the wounds of war, Dr. Schwartz carries a deep desire to serve both our nation and those who have worn our nation's uniform at a unique and exciting time in our history.

Her impressive personal and professional record, combined with her unquestionable dedication to our veterans, will make her an excellent addition to the VA's leadership as it faces critical challenges in supporting and caring for our veterans. Dr. Schwartz is a tireless and energetic advocate for our veterans, and we are proud to offer her our full support and strongest recommendation.

Sincerely,



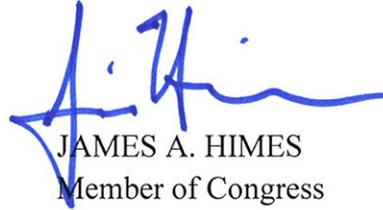
ROSA L. DeLAURO
Member of Congress



JOHN B. LARSON
Member of Congress



JOE COURTNEY
Member of Congress



JAMES A. HIMES
Member of Congress



ELIZABETH H. ESTY
Member of Congress

CC: Senator Richard Blumenthal
Senator Christopher S. Murphy