



Statement of Peter O'Rourke, President, National Association for Veteran Rights
House Veterans and Military Committee
Oral Testimony in Opposition to 2025 HB 2213
February 6, 2025

Thank you, Chair Thompson and members of the Committee, for allowing me to appear here today to present testimony in opposition to House Bill 2213 (HB 2213). My name is Peter O'Rourke, and I am the President of the National Association for Veteran Rights (NAVR). As a Veteran, the former Acting Secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs under President Trump, and Chief of Staff to the VA, I bring firsthand knowledge of the systemic challenges our nation's Veterans face when navigating the complex disability claims process. NAVR is a national trade association dedicated to advocating for the rights of service-disabled Veterans and promoting ethical, transparent business practices among organizations that serve them.

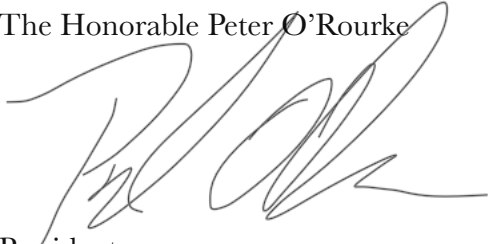
While we recognize the importance of protecting Veterans from predatory practices, this legislation unintentionally imposes undue restrictions on reputable organizations that are committed to providing high-quality claims assistance. By prohibiting compensation for vital services that Veterans voluntarily seek, HB 2213 risks limiting their ability to access expert guidance and navigate a system that is often fraught with delays, inefficiencies, and barriers.

Veterans deserve the freedom to choose their advocates, whether utilizing federally accredited representatives or seeking assistance from ethical, certified private organizations like those represented by NAVR. HB 2213, as currently written, would restrict Veterans' options without adequately addressing the root causes of systemic delays. By focusing solely on federally accredited entities, this legislation overlooks the significant role that responsible private organizations play in filling the gaps and supporting Veterans where traditional systems fall short. NAVR is committed to promoting transparency and ethical practices. We support provisions that prohibit predatory guarantees, require clear disclosures, and prevent excessive fees. However, these measures must not come at the cost of Veterans' freedom to seek the support they need to navigate this complex system.

Thank you for your time and your continued commitment to Kansas Veterans. Please reconsider this legislation in its current form and work toward a more balanced approach that truly serves those who have served us.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Peter O'Rourke

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter O'Rourke', written in a cursive style.

President

National Association for Veteran Rights (NAVR)