

OPENING STATEMENT
Ranking Member Marc Veasey (D-TX)
of the Subcommittee on Energy

House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
Subcommittee on Research and Technology
Subcommittee on Energy
Empowering Veterans through Technology
May 22, 2018

Thank you Chairwoman Comstock and Chairman Weber for holding this hearing. Thank you to the witnesses for being here today. As a member of the Armed Services Committee with over 18,000 veterans residing in my district, I'm aware of the sacrifices our service members make every day. As a nation, we must repay our veterans for their military service by easing their transition from military to civilian life. I'm pleased by the VA's partnership with the Department of Energy to harness the power of Big Data. This partnership will use the VA's data sets on service member health and DOE's supercomputing resources to identify trends that will be useful in treating conditions unique to service members.

With this data, we may be able to identify a veteran's risk for certain conditions or develop new treatments and prevention strategies. This partnership, known as the Big Data Science Initiative, will apply DOE's work on large-scale data analytics, computer modeling, large-scale machine learning, and natural language processing to a very real need. I look forward to hearing Dr. Kusnezov speak about the areas of research and development that will be required to address these issues.

I am also interested in learning more about advancements in prosthetics and exoskeletons that will preserve the independence of older and younger veterans alike. The work DOE has done in the realm of 3D printing and advanced manufacturing will undoubtedly make these devices stronger, lighter, and more affordable. I anticipate these advances will bring relief to many veterans suffering devastating losses of mobility.

Finally, the use of wearable technology and virtual reality to monitor and treat PTSD shows major promise. With as many as 1 in 5 veterans who served in Iraq or Afghanistan suffering from PTSD, the need for better treatment is clear. Work done at universities across the country, including in my home state of Texas, will lower the barriers to treatment for many veterans. By monitoring stress levels and finding creative solutions to allow veterans to speak more freely about PTSD, we will be able to preserve the lives of countless veterans. I look forward to hearing more from all each of our panelists on these important topics.

Thank you again, Madame Chair, and I yield back the balance of my time.