

OPENING STATEMENT

**Dr. Jacob (Jake) Lozada
Nominee, Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration
Department of Veterans Affairs
Before the
Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee
May 16, 2001**

Chairman Specter, Senator Rockefeller, and members of the Committee, it is a great honor and privilege for me to appear before you today as President Bush's nominee for the position of Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Should I be confirmed, I will be deeply humbled by this opportunity to serve my country and our veterans who have sacrificed for their country so valiantly. I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Secretary Principi for his support of my nomination to this position. I would also like to thank my family for their support throughout my entire professional career.

The Department of Veterans Affairs faces many of the same human resources challenges which most government agencies face. These challenges result from an aging workforce, the competition for human resources in a prosperous economy, and the need for established organizations to transform themselves into lifelong learning and high performing enterprises. We can meet these challenges by working together and with the strong support and involvement of the Congress, the veterans service organizations and our workforce representatives. We must focus our efforts on developing innovative

human resources strategies that fully support the mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs, on improving the quality and access to services, and by supporting the strategic goals that Secretary Principi has defined for the Department.

Human resources constitute the most important element of any organization. They are not a cost of doing business, but a valued asset that must be nurtured. The Department of Veterans Affairs can be a leader in hiring, developing, and maintaining a highly motivated human resource force. I want to be a part of this exciting journey and if confirmed, I promise to dedicate my efforts, and apply my experience, to achieve this vision.

If I am honored with your confirmation, I will bring to this position 26 years of experience as a Commissioned Officer and healthcare executive in the U.S. Army Medical Department, coupled with seven years as a consultant in large corporations in the private sector. During my military career I had the opportunity to lead large organizations undergoing radical change; manage force structure, personnel allocations and staffing; train and develop staff; and maintain high performing teams. During my tenure in the private sector, I have developed human resources programs for large organizations, and led in the development of innovative training and knowledge management capabilities in support of human resources programs.

Mr. Chairman, I would consider it an honor to work with you, other committee members, and your staff, in meeting the human resources challenges of the Department of Veterans Affairs. It would also be an honor to continue to

serve our nation's veterans. I would be pleased to respond to any questions that you and other committee members may have.

Thank you.