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# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

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2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074  
FACSIMILE (202) 225-3974  
MINORITY (202) 225-5051  
<http://oversight.house.gov>

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### Opening Statement

#### Rep. Elijah E. Cummings, Ranking Member

#### Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

#### Subcommittee on National Security, Homeland Defense and Foreign Operations

#### Hearing on "Preventing Stolen Valor: Challenges and Solutions"

February 29, 2012

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for calling this hearing today to examine the problem of fraudulent claims of military service awards and decorations.

As you know, in 2005 Congress passed the Stolen Valor Act to make it a crime for anyone to falsely claim the receipt of a congressionally authorized medal or decoration. When this legislation was considered in Congress it passed the House unanimously. Although the statute has since been challenged in court, I think we can all agree that Congress should do everything it can to ensure the integrity of our military awards and decorations.

As we consider potential solutions though, I think it is important to understand the scope of the problem. For example, in his written testimony, Mr. Nierle states that the Department of the Navy has received only two requests from law enforcement agencies for verification of military awards since 2008. Similarly, Mr. Herbert, the Director of Officer and Enlisted Personnel Management at the Department of Defense, states in his testimony that the "limited frequency of such claims" helps to "inform the way forward."

I look forward to hearing from panelists today about the scope of the problem so that we can ensure that Congress and the Executive respond appropriately.

I would just like to end by thanking all the witnesses for joining us today.

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Contact: Ashley Etienne, Communications Director, (202) 226-5181.