

**House Committee on Veterans' Services and Emergency Preparedness  
Meeting Date: 2/4/2014**

**HB 4023 Testimony of Stephanie Cornes:**

**YouTube Video, Remember the Marines**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fn9LgFDFwKQ>

We are the onlookers of a traumatic incident; We are the victims of assault and the survivors of war  
Our cabinets are lined with medications most people can't pronounce and have no knowledge of  
Our beliefs have shifted and we struggle finding ourselves and our place  
We have forgotten race, class, and gender--- we are all green  
Our friends and family remember who we were and forget that we are changed  
We fake our way through joyous events and public ventures  
Our smiles rarely reach our haunted eyes  
We live in the past and present at the same time  
Our minds move through time as though it does not exist  
The past is always the present and the present is always in the past  
We lose pieces of the present from moments in the past  
Moments we want to believe are over but are relived when another gives up  
We will all struggle to exist until we die, our cracked armor held together by pride  
Many of us will die of old age as life intended, some of us will be taken by fate  
And up to 5000 of us a year will die by our own hand, when we become weary of fighting an unending war  
We have seen enough pain and hurt to engulf a lifetime  
And a lifetime is all we have left  
We are leading the future generation, but how?  
We are broken, weathered images of our former self  
We will leave an imprint larger than the morals we possess  
We are painfully aware of our mortality  
And the human capacity to adapt, survive and overcome

But our history follows us like a slow plague  
Removing small pieces and important people until we are all that is left  
Our symptoms are alike but are completely different  
Our personal battles are different but we fight the same disease  
We have our own experiences and own triggers  
And most of us only sleep when we know we can't dream  
We can be impulsive and self destructive  
People do not understand our emotions and actions  
And we will never share the dark part of our lives with them  
We are a reminder of what the government and society are capable of  
Our youths consumed fighting a battle, uniting an empire to which we will never belong  
Our hearts are heavy, our souls broken- but our humanity remaining  
Your tax dollars have funded our destruction  
Some of us have become the angel of death, the taker of souls  
Our rifles have made us gods among men,  
We have defended those we have never known, protected and avenged the innocent  
We don't regret our decisions and life choices, but regretting something and living with it are different  
All of the battles we have fought, aren't half as brutal as the wars we wage on ourselves  
We stand in reverence of our fallen and continue marching through life  
We march on- hitting the ground almost as hard as it hit us back  
Leaving lacerated flags and buried dreams  
Preceded with white markers, defining our forgotten graves  
We have become lost in the dust and sand, remnants of what we lack  
We are your military, your marines, soldiers, sailors and airmen  
And although we are surrounded by others who suffer the same, We will stand in formation,  
Side by side, separated by an invisible wall, our fight is in our minds and we will face it alone