

**STATEMENT BY  
MS. KAELA HENSLEY**

**BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM**

**FIRST SESSION, 114<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS**

**U.S. General Services Administration Management of the Army Fee Assistance  
Program**

**10 SEPTEMBER 2015**

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM**

Chairman Chaffetz, Ranking Member Cummings, and other distinguished members of the committee—thank you for the opportunity to discuss the General Services Administration's (GSA) management of the Army Fee Assistance (AFA) program.

My name is Kaela Hensley; I am a Veterinary Technician at Odenton Veterinary Hospital. My family and I live at Fort Meade MD. My husband Evan Hensley, is a member of The U.S. Army, and has been since 2004. We have a daughter, Emily Hensley that is 2 years old and attends Kiddie Academy of Laurel.

### **Written Statement**

The following is the most accurate details to my recollection of my dealings with the General Services Administration (GSA) Child Care Subsidy Section:

On June 23, 2014, we received an e-mail from the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) detailing the steps to enrolling our daughter in an approved daycare program. We enrolled our daughter in daycare and made the first payment of \$295 on July 14, 2014. During the process of completing the application for NACCRRA, we accessed the NACCRRA website, found it was no longer available, and sent us to the GSA website. My husband and I was not informed of this change. GSA informed us they had taken over the program from NACCRA and required us to print all documents to resubmit due to no online application functionality. The application documents were different between the two programs and delayed our submission of the GSA application to August 13, 2014. After our submission, my husband made phones calls and left messages because we had not established any notifications stating they had received our application. After not receiving any notifications for over a month, we sent an e-mail to GSA September 17, 2014 stating:

*"Hi, this is Sgt Evan Hensley, I need to know how much longer this is going to take. I am barely able to afford my daughters daycare, I will have to pull her out soon if I do not get answers soon."*

*September 19, 2014 we received a reply message from GSA stating:*

*"Good Day,*

*We received your application on the 22nd of Aug. The GSA is receiving numerous applications in part due to the transition from NACCRRRA and we are working as quickly as possible to process the applications upon receipt. Once your case has been assigned to an Agency Representative, you will receive an email informing you of his/her contact information at which time your application will begin to be processed.*

*Thank you in advance for your patience and rest assured your application will be processed as quickly as possible as we know that the Army Fee Assistance is an important to you and your Family.”*

I feel the only reason they finally informed us what was going on was due to my husband both calling and emailing them. We believe they would not have reached out to us and would have taken even longer to process our application.

On September 24, 2014 we sent another email to GSA stating:

*“Hi I'm Sgt.Evan Hensley,*

*I need to know how long this will take to process through. Since I have been waiting since Aug. I am in desperate need of a time line, I understand others are in the same position, but i need confirmation that I am being taken care of I can't wait for months on end, and not knowing is causing stress in my finances.It's a very struggling time.*

*Warm regards  
Sgt. Evan Hensley”*

On September 25, 2014 we received an e-mail response from GSA stating:

*“Good Day,*

*Thank you for your application for the Army Fee Assistance program and your inquiry about the time frame for the processing of your application. At the current time, the GSA is unable to provide you with a time-frame for processing as all applications are processed in the order that they are received.*

*The GSA is receiving numerous applications in part due to the transition from NACCRRA and we are working as quickly as possible to process the applications upon receipt. Once your case has been assigned to an Agency Representative, you will receive an email informing you of his/her contact information at which time your application will begin to be processed.*

*Thank you in advance for your patience and rest assured your application will be processed as quickly as possible as we know that the Army Fee Assistance is an important to you and your Family.*

*Best Regards.”*

From the 26 September 2014 – 11 November 2014 we did not receive any other notifications. On November 12, 2014 we received an e-mail accepting our information, the process was all completed, and GSA subsidy started immediately.

During the GSA application time, we were spending \$1,278.33 a month, for our daughter to continue to attend daycare. The cost out of pocket before GSA subsidy finally started was so high that my husband, Evan, was placed in the awkward position of having to ask his parents for money.

## Oral Statement

Good Morning Chairman Chaffetz, Ranking Member Cummings, and other distinguished members of the committee.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak about my experience with General Services Administrations, handling of the Army Fee Assistance program. I am a Veterinary technician and my husband has served the U.S. Army for 11yrs.

When I finished school, I took on a new job as a vet tech, we tried to enroll our daughter into the on-post Child Development Center. That's when we were informed the wait-list would take a year, which meant AFA was our only option.

My husband and I never imagined the stress, the sleepless nights, and tears we would have to endure because of this decision. Pinching pennies to make ends meet, and feeling as a parent you have failed your child because you are unable to provide them with the basic essentials things like proper education, food, diapers and clothing.

Have you ever had to make a decision whether you should fill your gas tank up or buy bread for your family? These were the types of decisions GSA forced my husband and I to make.

We went as far as cancelling our cable subscription and switching cell phone provider just to have a couple more dollars in our bank account. We even used money from our savings to help pay for daycare, money that was supposed to be going towards purchasing a home. When our savings was no longer an option, my husband was placed in a humiliating position when he had to ask his parents for money

Because of GSA I was within 2 days of submitting my 2wks notice and removing our daughter from daycare. My husband and I made it through the four months of financial hardship, we were fortunate enough to have family who could help us in this trying time. But as for the other thousands of families who were, and probably still are, going through this, might not be as fortunate.

We cannot be alone in this struggle; Other Army families are likely experiencing similar or even worse hardships.

I hope after today, we will have that peace of mind knowing someone is listening and ready to take action on this matter.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you.