The POW Benefits Act (H.R. 1197) would remove the current 30-day internment requirement in order for former POWs to be eligible for disability compensation and adds two new conditions – type 2 diabetes and osteoporosis – for consideration of service connected disability compensation. Additionally, this legislation creates a process for other diseases related to a POW veterans' captivity to be considered by the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

"I am pleased the Subcommittee is examining this legislation, which would add important improvements to the care of our former POWs," said Bilirakis, both a member of Veterans' Affairs Committee and the DAMA Subcommittee. "Each of these POWs was forced to survive in captivity – often under horrific living conditions and at the expense of their own long-term physical and mental health – against their will to protect our freedom. It is because of this tremendous sacrifice that these brave men and women deserve comprehensive recovery benefits free of a requirement of time served in captivity."