



MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART

CHARTERED BY CONGRESS

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December 8, 2017

The Honorable Johnny Isakson
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
412 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jon Tester
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
825A Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Isakson and Ranking Member Tester:

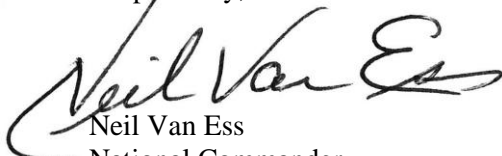
On behalf of the Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH), whose membership is comprised entirely of combat wounded veterans, I am pleased to offer our support for S. 2193, the *Caring for Our Veterans Act of 2017*, which would greatly improve veterans' access to the health care they have earned, both from community providers, and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities.

As we near the point at which the Veterans Choice Fund is set to run out, MOPH believes it is absolutely critical that veterans are not put at risk of losing access to community care. Your legislation solves this issue in the near term by adding \$3 billion to the Veterans Choice Fund, and in the long term, by replacing the temporary Veterans Choice Program with the permanent Veterans Community Care Program. The new program would also contain many improvements supported by MOPH, to include the elimination of the "30 day/40 mile rule."

In addition, your legislation would continue to improve quality and access at VA in a number of ways. These include granting new authorities to hire more doctors, improving telemedicine, and providing an additional \$1 billion to expand VA capacity. MOPH is particularly pleased that this bill would also finally expand full caregiver benefits to veterans of all eras.

MOPH commends you both for your steadfast, bipartisan leadership on this issue and your unwavering commitment to veterans and their families. We look forward to working with you to ensure the passage of this important legislation in the Senate, and ultimately, the passage into law of a bipartisan, bicameral bill that addresses each of these critical issues.

Respectfully,


Neil Van Ess
National Commander