



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

May 15, 2018
(House)

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

S. 2372—John S. McCain III, Daniel K. Akaka, and Samuel R. Johnson VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Networks Act of 2018, or the VA MISSION Act of 2018
(Rep. Roe, R-TN, and 21 cosponsors)

The Administration strongly supports House passage of S. 2372, the VA MISSION Act of 2018. This legislation would fundamentally transform elements of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare system, fulfill the President's commitment to provide veterans with more choice in their healthcare providers and prevent a funding shortfall in the current Veterans Choice Program (Choice Program). The bill is the product of months of work between the legislative and executive branches, and reflects an agreement reached between the Administration and key leaders in the House and Senate.

The VA MISSION Act would consolidate VA's community care programs into a new Veterans Community Care Program. This new program would strengthen the VA by merging the Department's tangled web of competing and confusing community care programs, including the Choice Program, into one system that is easier to navigate for veterans, VA employees, and community partners. It will help to ensure that veterans choose the VA by getting them the right care at the right time with the right provider. Additionally, unifying funding for the new VA community care program by using discretionary resources will increase transparency and accountability.

The Administration estimates that funding for the current Choice Program could be exhausted as early as May 31, 2018. This bill provides \$5.2 billion in mandatory funding for the Choice Program, which the Administration expects to be sufficient for the program to continue to provide care to veterans until the new, consolidated Veterans Community Care Program is operational—approximately one year after enactment of this bill. If this bill were enacted, the Choice Program should not require any additional mandatory funding.

S. 2372 would expand eligibility for the VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers, which promotes and enhances veteran wellbeing through the provision of unprecedented services and support to caregivers of veterans who require the care and assistance of another. Post-9/11 veterans have benefitted greatly from this program. The bill would end a disparity in veterans' benefits by expanding the program to include eligible veterans from all eras of service. The Administration looks forward to working with the Congress to ensure that adequate funding is provided for this expansion.

The VA's ability to effectively and efficiently manage its real property portfolio is a critical component of operating a high-performing and integrated healthcare system. The asset and

infrastructure review process in S. 2372 would provide the VA with the necessary flexibility to align its infrastructure footprint with the needs of our Nation's veterans. The VA will also benefit greatly from the provisions that strengthen its ability to recruit and retain quality healthcare professionals.

President Trump has been—and will continue to be—a champion for America's veterans. The Administration is proud of the steps that it already has taken to improve accountability and transparency at the VA. Enacting the VA MISSION Act will strengthen the VA's ability to deliver timely, high-quality healthcare in its own facilities, while ensuring seamless integration with community care providers. This will result in a 21st century system that offers our veterans the highest level of care in both VA facilities and the community.

The Administration urges the House and Senate to pass this critical legislation by Memorial Day to ensure that veterans can continue to receive care through the Choice Program without disruption.

If the VA MISSION Act of 2018 were presented to the President in its current form, his advisors would recommend that he sign it into law.

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