



July 17, 2014

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Russell Senate Office Building
Room 412
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Richard Burr
Hart Senate Office Building
Room 825A
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Sanders and Senator Burr,

As President and Chief Executive Officer of Ascension Health, the nation's largest Catholic and nonprofit health system, I write to offer our unqualified support for the nomination of Robert McDonald to be the next Secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Throughout his long and distinguished career at Procter & Gamble, Mr. McDonald demonstrated a strong commitment to making the health and wellbeing of individuals a top priority. As the former President, CEO and Chairman of P&G, he has shown great leadership as he led an organization with 121,000 employees that operates in 80 countries. His strong management skills and experience running such a large, respected organization will be invaluable assets as he manages and reforms the VA.

Mr. McDonald's background as a West Point graduate and U.S. Army Captain will make him a highly credible leader in the eyes of our nation's veterans. Even after moving into the private sector, he has continued his strong commitment to our nation's military, serving as a mentor for cadets and receiving the inaugural Leadership Excellence Award from the U.S. Naval Academy. His experience and ongoing support for our men and women in uniform will serve as critically important skills at this time when the VA must reassure the nation that those who have served this country in our times of greatest need will have access to the high quality health care services they deserve.

Ascension Health is committed to providing compassionate care to everyone. Our health system has over 1,500 sites of care in 23 states and the District of Columbia. Because of our close proximity to many over-burdened VA medical centers across the nation, we believe that Ascension can assist in providing access to high quality primary care, specialty care and acute care services for our veterans.

We are convinced that Mr. McDonald will be a highly effective leader of the Veterans Administration, and we look forward to working together in every way possible. Thank you for considering our request to approve the nomination of Robert McDonald for Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert J. Henkel'.

Robert J. Henkel, FACHE
President and Chief Executive Officer