

# The American Legion



OFFICE OF THE  
NATIONAL COMMANDER

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November 28, 2017

The Honorable Johnny Isakson, Chairman  
Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
SR-412 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Isakson:

On behalf of the 2 million members of The American Legion, I write to express support for the majority of this draft bill, *Caring for our Veterans Act of 2017*. This bill, as currently written, would transform the Veterans Affairs Choice Program into a new community care system that will provide better services and healthcare to our nations veterans. The one area that The American Legion cannot support is any language that seeks to charge a veteran for medical services related to their service-connected disability. Section 1725A does not protect a covered veteran from paying out-of-pocket fees for service-connected illnesses or injuries, and would need to be amended before The American Legion would be able to support this section.

The draft legislation, combined with the legislative requests from Veterans Affairs (VA), will begin to address the evolution of 21<sup>st</sup>-century medicine at VA in a way that will allow the department to provide greater access and develop stronger relationships with non-VA providers, ultimately moving toward a more integrated system with the veteran at the core.

Through American Legion Resolution number 363, titled *Consolidation of Department of Veterans Affairs Care in the Community Program*, passed at The American Legion's National Convention in 2016, we are able to support such a measure to better the quality of life for servicemembers and veterans.

The American Legion applauds your leadership in addressing issues that are important to America's servicemembers, veterans, and their families. We are thankful for the dedicated work your committee has done in addressing the Choice Program shortfalls and developing a new community care system. We stand with you in your efforts to pass meaningful legislation that supports our nation's heroes.

For God & Country,

Handwritten signature of Denise H. Rohan in cursive script.  
DENISE H. ROHAN

National Commander