

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 1, 2024

Chairman John Carter  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans  
Affairs and Related Agencies  
HT-2, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans  
Affairs and Related Agencies  
1036 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Carter and Ranking Member Wasserman Schultz,

As you prepare the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we write to request the inclusion of report language ensuring adequate care for veterans suffering from severe traumatic brain injuries (TBI) who require long-term residential care.

Each year, thousands of veterans are diagnosed with a TBI. While veterans with mild or moderate TBIs may return to full health after appropriate care, veterans with severe TBIs will be affected for the rest of their lives. Those veterans are likely to exhibit changes in memory, reasoning, impulse control, appropriate behavior, language, and emotional regulation. As a result, they will require an intensive level of long-term care.

After sustained pressure from Congress, we are pleased to see that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has made progress in implementing Veterans Care Agreements to allow private providers to contract with VA to provide appropriate long-term care. However, more needs to be done to educate case managers and families about options available to them. The Government Accountability Office recognized this need for further efforts in specialty care in its February 2020 report titled “Veterans’ Use of Long-Term Care is Increasing, and the VA Faces Challenges in Meeting the Demand” (GAO-20-284). The report states that VA’s Geriatric and Extended Care Office “has not established measurable goals for its efforts to address difficulties meeting veterans’ needs for specialty care” and that “without measurable goals...VA is limited in its ability to better plan for and understand progress towards addressing the challenges it faces meeting veterans’ long-term care needs.”

Accordingly, we request that the following language be included in the FY 2025 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies appropriations bill:

*Long-Term Care for Veterans with Severe Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).*—The Committee continues to note the increasing prevalence of deployment-related traumatic brain injuries. This increase continues to demonstrate the longstanding need for providing adequate long-term specialty care for Veterans suffering from severe TBIs. The Committee is encouraged by the Department’s progress in using agreements with non-VA providers to ensure all Veterans receive such long-term specialty care in their communities and directs the Department to continue entering into such agreements, to educate case managers on all tools available to provide Veterans with long-term specialty care outside the VA system, and to provide quarterly updates to Congress on the Department’s progress on providing access to long-term care to veterans with severe TBIs.

We appreciate your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

[[SIGNATURES]]

DRAFT