

Congressman French Hill (AR-02)
Subcommittee on Military Construction, VA and Related Agencies
Oral Testimony
Date: Tuesday, April 17, 2018

Chairman Dent, Ranking Member Schultz, and Members of the Subcommittee:

I appreciate the opportunity to testify in front of you today in support of expanded research into the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) “40-mile rule”.

The Veterans Choice Program (VCP) provides veterans with the ability to receive medical care in the community, outside the VA, when required or necessary.

One requirement for eligibility under VCP is for a veteran to live more than 40 miles (driving distance) from the nearest VA medical facility with a full-time primary care physician.

This does not account for facilities within the 40-mile radius that may not provide the proper services for any given veteran.

My district is home to many of our brave veterans and service members at Little Rock Air Force Base and Camp Robinson, and I have heard concerns from a number of our veterans about the 40-mile rule within the VCP.

The Choice Program was designed to make it easier for our veterans to receive the care they deserve, and I don’t believe the distance a veteran lives from a facility should affect the care they receive.

For this reason, I respectfully request that you include the following language in the FY19 MilCon-VA bill:

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary shall conduct a review of the Veterans Choice Program “40-mile rule” and determine whether it serves the best interest of our veterans. The Secretary shall issue a report to Congress on such policy not later than 1 year after enactment of the act.

Thank you, and I appreciate your consideration.