

Chairman Roe, Ranking Member Walz, and Members of the Committee:

I appreciate the opportunity to testify in front of you today to discuss the importance of reforming the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) "40-mile rule" within the Veterans Choice Program (VCP).

The Veterans Choice Program 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 (as defined by 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.

I have three wounded warriors on my staff at the district office in Little Rock and over 50,000 veterans in the Second Congressional District of Arkansas, so this is a prime focus as my office works to give our veterans the care they have earned.

Congressman French Hill (AR-02)
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
Oral Testimony

Date: Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Further, 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 persistent concerns from a number of our veterans about the 40-mile rule within the VCP.

The rural area that I represent is hit especially hard by this rule that bases care on geographic location rather than serving the needs of our veterans.

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 necessarily affect the care they receive.

For this reason, as you continue your work to ensure our veterans receive the care they deserve, I respectfully urge you to make addressing the 40-mile rule a top priority.

My office and I stand ready and willing to help in any way that we can.

Thank you again for this opportunity, and I appreciate your consideration of my request.