



# NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

Affiliated with the International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers, AFL-CIO

The Honorable Mark Takano  
Chairman  
House Committee on Veteran Affairs  
B234 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Phil Roe  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Veteran Affairs  
3460 O'Neil House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20024

June 18, 2019

Chairman Takano, Ranking Member Roe, Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the more than 100,000 federal workers and the employees of the Veterans Affairs Department (VA) represented by the National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE), I write to you today to urge you to oppose H.R. 3083, the "AIR Acceleration Act." This legislation. Should it become law, would authorize the Asset and Infrastructure Review Commission to meet earlier than the agreed upon timelines established in the VA MISSION Act. While the commission is called "asset and infrastructure review" it is nothing more than a Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) style panel for VA facilities. NFFE unequivocally opposes this section of the law and, without question, opposes this legislation.

From the beginning of the debate surrounding the MISSION Act, NFFE has sounded the alarm on this proposal and the negative affect it will have on patient care generally and the world-class VA system broadly. The commission will result in the closure of VA facilities. That, coupled with the MISSION Act's extremely broad access standards, will mean the VA's increased reliance on private providers for veterans' healthcare needs – privatization of the VA.

What is especially troubling about this commission is that it will take away Congressional authority involving the building, renovating, and closing of VA facilities. The way this commission is designed, Congress would have to pass a resolution of disapproval in order to override a decision made by the commission. Congress should be responsible for overseeing the funding and the maintenance of the VA's physical plant, not unelected political appointees in Washington, D.C.

Once VA facilities are closed, every veteran in that area will then be issued a voucher and forced to the private sector. Given the continuing problems of VA private sector care and standards, under no circumstances should we speed up this process by allowing the Commission to meet earlier than the agreed upon timelines as H.R. 3083 would do if enacted.

NFFE strongly urges you to oppose H.R. 3083; rather, and support the world-class, veteran-centric institution that is the VA, employing and caring well for America's veterans.

Sincerely,

*/s/ Randy Erwin*

Randy Erwin, National President