

**US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

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**TESTIMONY OF HON. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY**

**SEPTEMBER 9, 2019**

INTRODUCTION

Chairman Takano, Ranking Member Roe, and Members of the Committee, I thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. I am asking the Committee on Veterans Affairs to consider two of my bills, the “Get Veterans a Doctor Now Act” and the “Disabled Veterans Red Tape Reduction Act,” to bring to Committee. These bills address two specific problems with how our government cares for the brave men and women of the uniformed services after they have returned from combat. I represent the United States Military Academy at West Point, as well as thousands of military families - both active and retired. I have engaged this community through multiple Veteran centered organizations, like VetsFirst, AMVETS, and the Military Order of the Purple Heart, which have been instrumental in the creation of this legislation. Our responsibility to honor those who are willing to sacrifice everything does not end when they return home and I appreciate the hard work the Members of this Committee do in that regard.

GET VETERANS A DOCTOR ACT

As our nation’s veterans seek medical treatment, it is our duty to fulfill our promise to them by ensuring that VA medical centers are adequately staffed. The VA is facing a hiring backlog, which has left over 43,000 medical jobs unfilled, creating lengthy delays in access to

service. This is unacceptable and another example of how our nation has fallen short in caring for those who were willing to fight and put their lives on the line for our freedom.

Currently, the VA must wait to recruit resident doctors until they have completed their residency as doctors. My bill, the Get Veterans a Doctor Now Act, allows the VA to recruit resident physicians earlier, offering doctors a conditional job offer up to two years prior to their graduation. This bipartisan bill removes this limitation, allowing the VA to compete with the private sector for the best doctors.

One way to correct the current backlog is to actively recruit physicians to work at VA facilities early in their careers. Changing recruiting provisions for VA health centers would not only help to fill open positions but would also ensure that our veterans get the care they deserve, in a timely manner. Allowing the VA to recruit doctors before they have completed their residency will increase competition between the private sector and VA hospitals, leading to higher quality care for our nation's veterans.

#### DISABLED VETERANS RED TAPE REDUCTION ACT

The Disabled Veterans Red Tape Reduction Act amends the Veterans Benefits Act of 2003 to extend through 2020 the Department of Veterans Affairs authority to have contracted physicians perform medical disability evaluations. This provision was included in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019. Easier access to medical disability evaluations will lead to veterans obtaining the benefits they're owed in a more efficient manner. The bill is a simple fix which will help the VA adequately serve our Veterans.

## CONCLUSION

To close, I again want to thank the Committee for their time and attention to these two important pieces of legislation. I would be pleased to respond to questions you or the other Members of the Committee may have. The brave men and women I represent appreciate your leadership on these issues and respect for their service.