

February 24, 2025

The Honorable Mike Bost  
Chairman  
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

The Honorable Mark Takano  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

RE: "Legislative Hearing on: H.R. 472, The Restore VA Accountability Act of 2025; H.R. 1041, Veterans 2nd Amendment Protection Act; Discussion Draft: To amend title 38, United States Code, to prohibit the Secretary of Veterans Affairs from transmitting certain information to the Department of Justice for use by the national instant criminal background check system; H.R. 740, Veterans' ACCESS Act of 2025; and Discussion Draft: Student Veteran Benefit Restoration Act of 2025."

Dear Chairman Bost and Ranking Member Takano,

The National Association of Veterans' Research and Education Foundations (NAVREF) represents over 75 VA-affiliated nonprofit corporations (also known as NPCs) and is committed to advancing the VA's mission through fostering innovative public-private partnerships, investing in groundbreaking research, and enhancing veterans' healthcare. Each year, our members drive over \$300M in external research investments across the VA. Within our congressionally authorized infrastructure lies a powerful opportunity to boldly enhance VA's capacity to forge strategic industry partnerships with biomedical and biotechnology sectors for the advancement of veteran healthcare.

We are grateful for the opportunity to submit this statement to the Full Committee Legislative Hearing on February 25, 2025. As the hearing examines the future of veterans' care, NAVREF wishes to express its concern regarding the proposed HR 740 and its potential ramifications for veterans' healthcare and research.

Community care remains a critical component of the VA healthcare system; however, issues persist related to the continuum of care once a veteran is seen outside the VA. Access to clinical trials, emerging treatments, and cutting-edge research is one of the most significant benefits the VA can offer veterans, and it is imperative that these opportunities are safeguarded within the framework of community care. Currently, the lack of integration and coordination between VA and community care providers places these advancements at risk, jeopardizing veterans' access to innovative therapies that could improve their health outcomes.

A key area of concern is the absence of structured pathways for veterans receiving community care to participate in VA clinical research. *The Red Team Executive Roundtable Report* highlighted this concern, emphasizing that without reliable data-sharing mechanisms, veterans treated in the private sector may be inadvertently excluded from groundbreaking medical advancements. This data, integral to the advancements in veterans' healthcare, has enabled impressive strides in understanding and treating conditions unique to veterans. NAVREF believes there are opportunities for third-party administrators (TPAs) managing community care contracts to establish clear mechanisms to ensure veterans remain connected to VA research opportunities, even when seeking care outside the VA.

NAVREF urges Congress to carefully consider the implications of HR 740 and the potential disruption it will cause to the VHA's ability to provide high-quality care and conduct research. The integration of care and research is fundamental to advancing veterans' healthcare and ensuring their needs are met in a comprehensive and effective manner.

Sincerely,

*Rashi Romanoff*

Rashi Romanoff

Chief Executive Officer

National Association of Veterans' Research and Education Foundations