



Aug. 20, 2020

The Honorable Mark Takano
Chairman
Veterans Affairs Committee
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Phil Roe
Ranking Member
Veterans Affairs Committee
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Chairman Takano and Ranking Member Roe:

On behalf of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), I respectfully request swift passage by your Committee and the House of the *Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act* (S. 785) to expand mental health treatment access for veterans.

S. 785 has been and remains the most ambitious and comprehensive mental health and suicide prevention legislation this Congress. IAVA made it a top priority as soon as it was conceived in early 2019, even before VSOs joined with you and House leaders to make an urgent call for solutions in the wake of yet another veteran suicide at a VA facility. That was more than a year and a half ago and it sadly seems to be fading from public memory.

Due to the rapidly-shortening legislative calendar in the 116th Congress, the possible impact of the electoral calendar on opportunities for success, and the recent Senate passage following a bipartisan agreement that included the Administration, time is of the essence to get this bill to the president's desk. This could be done by the end of this month, and it would be a significant victory for all of us in the fight to help veterans struggling to combat the invisible wounds of war.

I genuinely appreciate the valuable work we have done with your Committee over the years through multiple leadership turnovers. Your members on both sides have brought forth many worthy proposals to address veterans health and suicide, and we do not want to skip a step in continuing our advocacy for many of those provisions following enactment of S. 785.

I appreciate your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Butler", written in a cursive style.

Jeremy Butler, CEO
Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America