

October 20, 2017

The Honorable David P. Roe, M.D.  
Chairman  
Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Timothy J. Walz  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Roe and Ranking Member Walz:

The Reserve Officers Association of the United States represents all seven of our nation's uniformed services, both non-commissioned and commissioned officers in the Reserve and Guard Components. Under our 1950 Congressional charter, our purpose is to promote the development and execution of policies that will provide adequate national defense. We do so by developing and offering expertise on the use and resourcing of America's Reserve and Guard Components.

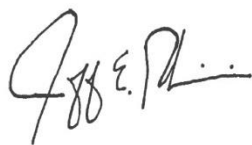
The association is pleased to provide this letter of support for legislation to establish a permanent Veterans Choice program. We appreciate the continued bipartisan leadership of the committee, the dedication of the Members and the hard work of the professional staff, all who are devoted to enhancing and improving the VA community care system. Additionally, we thank the committee for allowing ROA to improve and enhance the bill through offered technical corrections.

In particular, we thank the committee for adding legislative language granting the VA Secretary greater flexibility in giving priority for specialty care to VA medical facilities and for giving veterans more community care options. Specifically, once a veteran is enrollment in VHA care the VA will assign them a primary care provider. If the VA cannot assign that veteran to a VA primary care provider because of a shortage of healthcare personnel, the veteran may select a community primary care provider from a list of available networks. Factors such as the burden of travel, geography, environmental factors, the veteran's medical condition, and any recommendations from the primary care provider will all be considered.

While the bill is not a "pathway to privatization" it also does not take away VA benefits from the veterans. We believe this important bill ultimately benefits all veterans because it provides flexibility and options which are not currently available.

Thank you again for your strong efforts to improve health care choices and flexibility for our military community, especially members of the Reserves and National Guard. Please have your staff call John Rothrock, ROA's legislative director, at 202-646-7713 or e-mail at [jrothrock@roa.org](mailto:jrothrock@roa.org) with any questions or issues you would like to discuss.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey E. Phillips  
Maj. Gen., USA (Ret.)  
Executive Director