

**Statement for the Record
Veterans' Affairs Committee**

Bipartisan Working Group

May 16, 2018

Chairman Roe, Ranking Member Walz, and Members of the Committee,

As Members of the Bipartisan Working Group (BPWG), we have made it a priority of ours in Congress to come together regularly with members on both sides of the aisle. Each week Congress is in session, we meet to listen to one another and to understand opposing points of view. BPWG has shown us that bipartisanship is possible. We can talk with one another and have real disagreements on key issues while also forging consensus on others. For many of our members, BPWG has been an avenue through which to form lasting legislative partnerships to enact meaningful change.

A result of these partnerships is a bipartisan package of bills BPWG introduced in September 2017. H.R. 3874, the Accountability for Quality VA Healthcare Act, would improve the delivery of quality care to our nation's veterans by addressing ongoing challenges the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has faced.

These solutions come from a series of Government Accountability Office (GAO) studies that uncovered problems at the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). As part of its work, BPWG met with the GAO to learn more about their reviews of the VA and its efforts to adopt best practices. Based on their analysis, GAO had determined the VA had failed to fully implement hundreds of its recommendations for improving access to care and management.

While many issues in Congress are fraught with partisanship and diverging points of view, the desire to take care of our veterans is thankfully not one of them. Members of BPWG were able to comb through these recommendations and develop policy proposals to ensure the VA is improving its health system for the veterans we represent.

We owe it to those who served not to let partisanship or gridlock get in the way of getting veterans the care they earned. BPWG is committed to finding consensus and solving problems like those that have been plaguing the VA. We are proud to have worked with colleagues from both parties on this legislation, and we urge the Committee to review and consider its provisions as it weighs future reforms to the VA system.

We look forward to working with you on these endeavors.

Sincerely,



Derek Kilmer
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Jim Renacci
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Andy Barr
MEMBER OF CONGRESS




Stephanie Murphy
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Lou Barletta
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



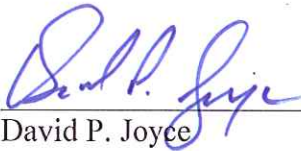
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