



OFFICE OF THE
NATIONAL COMMANDER

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January 23, 2014

Honorable Bernie Sanders, Chairman
Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs
SR-412 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Sanders:

On behalf of the 2.4 million members of The American Legion, I would like to offer our full support for passage of Senate bill 1950, *The Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014*. This bill contains more than 130 provisions that address a wide range of programs and services to support our veteran community.

Through resolution, The American Legion strongly supports a great number of provisions contained in this bill and has worked closely with the Committee over the past year to bring some of these efforts to this point.

Specifically, The American Legion supports sections;

- 201 – Require schools who participate in the GI Bill program to offer in-state tuition to veterans
- 325 – Require VA to report infectious disease outbreaks to local authorities
- 327 – Improve rural healthcare access for veterans
- 328 – Improve the VA telemedicine program
- 331 – Support for alternative medicines at VA
- 362 – Increased support for Military Sexual Trauma victims
- 381 – Immediate authorization for the group of Community Based Outreach Clinics that are currently unfunded due to Congressional Budget Office scoring conflicts
- 401 – Extend the veterans Retraining Assistance program (VRAP)
- 621 – Establish a Work Credit program at the Veterans Benefits Administration
- 701 – Increase VA program awareness

SCVA Chairman Sanders Letter

REF: S 1950

Jan. 23, 2014

The American Legion also appreciates the many areas in which this bill addresses needed attention regarding Military Sexual Trauma counseling, additional training and assistance for Traumatic Brain Injury victims, improvements and much needed updates to the Dependency and Indemnification Compensation program, VA's Work Study program, and their On the Job Training program.

Additionally, The American supports section 801 which repeals the harmful effects of the Bipartisan Budget Agreement of 2013 that impose an unfair tax on military retirees below the age of 63 by reducing their Cost of Living Allowance by 1 percent each year.

Finally, The American Legion supports the provision in Section 302 that would open VA healthcare access to all priority groups, and looks forward to working closely with the Committee and VA on a practical implementation plan that addresses co-pay schedules, premiums, and prescription drug costs.

The American Legion applauds you and the Committee for the priority that you are placing on this nation's service members and veterans, by tackling the challenge of authorizing and funding these vital programs. Thank you for your support of our nation's service members, veterans, and their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel M. Dellinger".

DANIEL M. DELLINGER

National Commander