



**Commissioned Officers Association
Of the U.S. Public Health Service**

Gerard M. Farrell
Captain U.S. Navy (Ret)
Executive Director

16 January 2014

The Honorable Bernard Sanders
Chair, Committee on Veterans' Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510.

Re: Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act

Dear Senator Sanders:

This Association is pleased to support and endorse your ongoing efforts to safeguard the compensation and health care and other benefits that our Nation's veterans have rightly earned.

As you know, the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) is one of seven federal uniformed services. It is the second-smallest, with an active-duty force of approximately 6,800 physicians, nurses, engineers, dentists, and other health professionals. USPHS officers are "veterans" under Section 213(d) of Title 42 of the U.S. Code (The Public Health Service Act), as well as other provisions in federal law.

This Association's members, all of whom are active-duty or retired USPHS officers, have a built-in interest in your bill, S. 944, as it moves through the Senate. Although we have not yet seen final language, I feel certain that its provisions will serve our members well.

This Association remembers – and greatly appreciates – the support that you demonstrated for the USPHS in 2008 when it became clear the USPHS had been left out of the original Post-9/11 GI Bill. It took three years to correct that oversight in the statute. You were among our earliest champions in that effort, and we will be forever grateful.

Thank you again for your energetic work on behalf of veterans. My staff and I stand ready to work with you and your staff on veterans' issues and on health care issues generally.

Sincerely,

Gerard M. Farrell
Captain, USN (Ret.)
Executive Director