Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 21, 2025

The Honorable Doug Collins
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Collins,

In January, Congress directed the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to increase the reimbursement for organizations serving homeless veterans through the Grant and Per Diem (GPD) program. For months, the Department has provided assurances that this bipartisan priority would be implemented as soon as possible. Now, nearly a year later, you continue to withhold these critical funds and undercut the very lifeline that supports nearly 25,000 veterans in their greatest time of need.

Again, we urge you to immediately adhere to bipartisan, bicameral Congressional intent and fully implement Section 402 of P.L. 118-210, *the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act of 2025* (the Dole Act). While we acknowledge the Department increased the GPD per diem rate in September from 115% to 133% of the State Home Domiciliary Rate, the law also calls for VA to reimburse providers who operate in high-cost areas, serve veterans with extensive care needs, or offer expanded services up to 200% of the State Home Domiciliary Rate. This is in addition to the base funding increase for all providers.

This legislative language is the result of years of calls from VA and homeless advocacy groups to raise the per diem rate to more adequately reimburse providers for the services they deliver to veterans. Failure to exercise this authority is a betrayal to Congress, community service providers, and homeless veterans, and failure to exercise this authority will move us further from the goal we share to end veteran homelessness. Any additional delays in the implementation of these policies, which have strong bipartisan backing and the support of Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) and homeless service providers, will negatively impact the delivery of these services for this extremely vulnerable population of veterans.

Section 402 of the Dole Act was enacted to make certain that providers could be retained in the program and veterans could continue to receive these critically important services. For years, the number of organizations participating in GPD has decreased drastically because the funds authorized per veteran serviced by each provider were too low to provide basic care and services amid growing costs of living and increasing needs of homeless veterans, especially as the veteran population ages. Since the end of the pandemic public health emergency, which temporarily allowed for a funding increase, 74 grantees (operating nearly 1,000 beds) have withdrawn from the program. Delays in implementation risk further decreased services for homeless veterans in communities across the country.

In the years of negotiations and communication with Congress before the Dole Act became law, VA assured Congress the Department would be fully able to implement these changes immediately after the bill was signed into law. Further, Congress and the Department were clear that the overall cap increase would be applied congruent with current GPD guidelines, and waivers for funding increases above that cap would be provided to organizations in regions with high costs of living, high rates of veterans homelessness, minimal alternative services for homeless veterans, or other challenges that require more time, effort, and funds from organizations. These assurances are in line with the intent of Congress at the time of the enactment of the Dole Act.

Congress took additional steps to allow for timely implementation of section 402 with the passage of P.L. 119-31, *the VA Home Loan Program Reform Act,* which was signed into law on July 30, 2025. Section 5 of this legislation increased the authorization of appropriations for comprehensive service programs for homeless veterans, which includes the GPD program, to $344 million. This came after the Department very belatedly notified Congress that the previous authorization of appropriation for these programs was a barrier to implementation of section 402 of the Dole Act. Three months have passed and this provision is still not fully implemented, and VA has not provided any additional justification for this egregious and harmful delay.

We write today to reaffirm the clear intent of Congress and to strongly urge you to fully implement the GPD per diem rate increases by **December 5, 2025** and to backdate those increases to the beginning of fiscal year 2026, which began on October 1, 2025. We also request a response to this letter with VA's planned timeframe for implementing the increase, consistent with Congressional intent by December 5, 2025. There is no excuse for further delay. You have legal authority, funding, and appropriate policy plans in place for full implementation.

Once these rates have been increased, it is critical the Department completes its strategic review of the GPD program in direct consultation and coordination with Congress, GPD providers, homelessness advocates, VSOs, and other stakeholders as required by law in Section 402 of the Dole Act. Only once that plan is complete and approved by Congress should any further changes be made to the GPD program.

Sincerely,

Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs

Mark Takano
Ranking Member
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs