

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S FY 2019 BUDGET IMPACT ON VETERANS

President Donald Trump's proposed Fiscal Year 2019 budget lays the groundwork for future Secretaries & Administrations to dismantle VA care and push more veterans into the uncertainty of private sector care. The proposed budget also makes it more difficult to hold the VA accountable and includes future cuts to critical benefits for our nation's veterans.

The President's budget does not provide adequate resources to maintain existing VA facilities.

- If the VA's existing facilities continue to fall into disrepair, the **VA will not be able to support veterans** at the VA, and will send more and more veterans to the private sector.
- In the recent budget agreement, Democrats fought for \$4 billion to upgrade and enhance VA facilities over the next two years. Unfortunately, there are reports that **the VA plans to spend only half of that on facilities and would divert the other \$2 billion to pay for private health care.**
- The President proposed a further **cut of \$600 million in medical facilities accounts**, allowing the VA's already aging facilities to continue to deteriorate.

The President's budget blocks oversight and transparency by Congress and the independent Inspector General.

- The VA has proposed to **merge the account from which it funds private health care with the account used to care for veterans within the VA**, allowing the VA to hide increased spending on private care.
- The President proposed downsizing the Office of Inspector General, which independently investigates and **holds the VA accountable for quality and timely care, proper spending of taxpayer dollars, and ethical behavior of VA personnel.**

Senator Jon Tester

Ranking Member, Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee

Senator Bernie Sanders

Ranking Member, Senate Budget Committee

The President's budget limits veterans' access to important VA services.

- The President **cut funding for the caregiver program**, despite the fact it saves money over the long term.
- The President plans to **cut \$30 billion from disability benefits.**
- Over the past two budget requests, the President proposed to **cut \$75 million from Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment initiatives**, which provide career counseling and job training to disabled veterans entering the workforce.
- The VA hasn't sufficiently invested in partnerships with states to meet the growing demand for State Homes for veterans. **Without an appropriate investment, the VA will have to pay for more expensive private nursing home care.**
- To begin paying for a new electronic health records system, the VA has proposed to **transfer \$782 million out of the Veterans Health Administration's medical care accounts**, where it would no longer be used to hire clinicians or provide VA care for veterans.
- Though in the last year veteran homelessness **increased** for the first time in a decade, the President **zeroed out the Department of Housing and Urban Development's funding for HUD-VASH vouchers**, which provides housing options for homeless veterans.