



January 16, 2018

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Because of your laser like focus during the campaign on VA and national security issues, almost three million more Veterans voted in 2016 than in 2012. Those Veterans believed in what you promised, and look for you to ensure their interests are protected.

A key element of your campaign that resonated especially with Veterans was your promise to choose their health care provider, as you detailed in the 10th point of your 10-Point Plan for VA Reform: **"We are going to ensure every Veteran in America has the choice to seek care at the VA, or to seek private medical care paid for by our government."**

The Independence Fund fully supports the complete execution of that promise – the Veteran should be able to choose his or her healthcare provider while under the VA's care, whether that be a provider within the VA, or from outside the VA in the community.

Unfortunately, neither bill reported by either the House or Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, H.R. 4242 or S. 2193 respectively, deliver on your campaign promise. In fact, they both perpetuates Veterans dependence on VA chosen health care providers, and will limit the Veteran to only those health care providers the VA chooses. Both bills explicitly state the VA must approve community care outside the VA and further limit care to specific criteria established by the VA, further limiting the VA health care provider from choosing community care for the Veteran.

When you compare what you demanded in your campaign alongside the provisions of the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committee bills, the contrast could not be starker, nor the shortcomings of those bills clearer. Your campaign promise put health care decision-making authority with the Veteran; just like they have under Medicare, Medicaid, or Tricare. The bills passed out of Committee leave health care decision making with nameless bureaucrats who have consistently and repeatedly failed Veterans.

Therefore, Mr. President, **we implore your Administration make it clear to the House of Representatives and the Senate that neither Committee passed bill comes close to your requirements, and that you cannot accept them. In the alternative, we believe S. 2184, The Veterans Community Care and Access Act, and H.R. 4457, The Veterans Empowerment Act, come closest to meeting your campaign promise**, and believe Senators McCain and Moran, as well as Representative Lamborn must be parties to any agreed VA healthcare reform legislation considered by Congress.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration, and feel free to call upon us if you have any questions. We look forward to working with you on this vitally important issue.

Very Respectfully,

Bob Carey
CAPT, USN (Ret)
Director, Policy & Advocacy

Copy to:
The Honorable David Shulkin, Secretary of Veterans Affairs
Andrew Bremberg, Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy