



H.R. 369, Eliminating the Sunset Date of the Choice Act

Background:

The Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act ([P.L. 113-146](#)), also known as the Choice Act, established the Veterans Choice Program. The Choice Act included language to state that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is authorized to continue services until August 7, 2017, or until the funds provided under the Choice Act ran out, whichever occurred first. While the authorization is set to expire on August 7, 2017, the VA has informed Congress there will still be funds remaining in the Veterans Choice Program after August 7, meaning veterans could still access health care services under the Choice Act if Congress eliminates the sunset date. Should Congress eliminate the sunset date of the Veterans Choice Program, veterans utilizing the program can continue seeking care outside the VA under this authority, paid for with funds that have already been appropriated, while Congress continues to pursue VA reform.

VA Deputy Secretary Sloan Gibson sent a letter requesting Congress eliminate the sunset date last December.

The Message:

- The VA is in dire need of wholesale reform, but veterans receiving care through the Choice Program should be allowed to continue that care until the funds promised under the Choice Program have been used.
- By eliminating the sunset date of the Choice Act, Congress is ensuring veterans have certainty and continuity of care while we work with the Trump administration to develop a strategic plan that addresses the need for a veteran-centric, coordinated network of care that utilizes the strengths of both VA and community health providers.
- H.R. 369 makes good on the promise that Congress has made to our veterans and will allow for the continued progress toward comprehensive VA reform.

You can read the text of H.R. 369 [here](#).