

# HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

CHAIRMAN MIKE BOST

## No Wrong Door for Veterans Act

### Background:

The Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program (Fox Grant Program) was authorized by the passage of the *Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019* ([P.L. 116-171](#)). The purpose of the Fox Grant Program is to provide community-based mental health organizations grant funding to increase access to mental health care, support, and suicide prevention services for veterans in the communities where they live. In return, through the Fox Grant Program, the reach of VA's mental health services has been expanded and veterans are connected with the care and treatment — whether traditional or nontraditional — that meets their needs. As of September 2023, hundreds of grantees have completed over 20,000 outreach contacts to veterans. However, under current law, this pilot program will expire at the end of the FY25.

The *No Wrong Door for Veterans Act* would reauthorize the Grant Program for an additional 3 years into FY2028. In addition to the reauthorization, this bill would make improvements to enhance the Fox Grant Program.

- Many grantees who have received grants have expressed confusion about regulations within the Fox Grant Program; *this bill would reduce confusion by clarifying specifically what the grant funds may be used for, and streamlining the admission for veterans.*
- Many grantees have shared concerns that local VA Medical Centers (VAMCs) are not aware of the Fox Grant program or their role in coordinating mental health support for the veteran patient; *this bill would require VAMCs, to coordinate with grantees through quarterly briefings to educate VA facility staff and improve outcomes for veteran patients.*
- *This bill would move oversight of the Fox Grant Program from the Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention into the Office of Clinical Services.*
- Finally, many grantees have expressed concerns that when they contact VAMC staff, they are still having trouble getting veterans timely mental health services; *this bill would make veterans eligible for community-based emergency mental health care if VA is unable to provide mental health care within 72 hours of first contact from the organization.*

### The Message:

- First and foremost, veterans need to have access to mental health resources that work for them. The *No Wrong Door for Veterans Act* would rightfully provide the education and resources to ensure that there is no wrong door when it comes to preventing veteran suicide.
- The Fox Grant Program has played a pivotal role in expanding the reach of VA's mental health care and support services in the communities where veterans live, and it must be reauthorized.
- This program has been successful in its first iteration in terms of outreach to veterans, but improvements are necessary to clarify the intent and administration of the program to ensure it meets the needs of veterans and their families.