

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

REPUBLICANS | RANKING MEMBER MIKE BOST

The VA Transparency & Trust Act of 2021

Background:

Congress provided the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) with \$243.3 billion in fiscal year (FY) 2021. That is the biggest base budget VA has ever had. In addition, since March 2020, Congress has also provided VA with \$36.63 billion dollars in emergency relief funding to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. That emergency relief funding includes \$30 million from the Families First Coronavirus Response Act and \$19.6 billion in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, both of which had broad bipartisan support. It also includes \$17 billion in the American Rescue Plan, which passed along a party line vote in both the House and Senate. At the time of the American Rescue Plan's passage, roughly \$10 billion in CARES Act funding remained unspent by VA. Despite repeated requests from lawmakers, VA still has not provided a detailed explanation for why the additional emergency relief funding in the American Rescue Plan was needed or how it will be used to better serve veterans.

Veterans and the American people deserve to know how their hard-earned taxpayer dollars are being spent. The VA Transparency & Trust Act of 2021 would require VA to provide information to Congress on a regular basis about how VA is using the tens of billions of dollars in emergency relief funding that the Department has received during the pandemic. It would also require the VA Inspector General and the Government Accountability Office to audit and report publicly on VA's emergency relief spending. This would provide needed transparency and ensure that VA is a responsible steward of taxpayer money.

The Message:

- Congress gave VA unprecedented amounts of money to respond to COVID-19. VA must be held accountable for how that money is spent.
- The VA Transparency & Trust Act of 2021 would shed light on how VA's is spending tens of billions of dollars in COVID-relief funding to help veterans.
- It is the right thing to do to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse and make sure that taxpayer money is spent wisely in support of VA's sacred mission.