



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
VETERANS' AFFAIRS
Chairman Phil Roe, M.D.

H.R. 5693: The Long Term Care Veterans Choice Act

Background:

The Department of Veterans Affairs supports America's veterans through three administrations. The Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA) handles all benefits provided to veterans outside of health care and cemetery services, which are administered by the Veterans Health Administration and the National Cemetery Administration.

VBA tends to focus on the administration of disability compensation and pension claims. As a result, other VA benefits related to the GI Bill, vocational rehabilitation, home loan benefits and VA's portion of the Transition Assistance Program do not receive the prioritization, resources and IT support needed to serve America's veterans.

VHA's Medical Foster Home program (MFH), provides a non-institutional long-term care alternative for eligible veterans. VA does provide care team support to MFHs, but does not have the authority to pay for the cost of MFHs. As a result, veterans must use personal or other funding sources should they choose to live in MFHs rather than nursing homes.

H.R. 5693 would create a fourth administration, led by a designated undersecretary, charged with administering the many benefits available to veterans beyond disability claims and pensions, as well as the verification of small businesses under the Vets First program. Creation of a new administration would not impact DoL employment programs and would be created within existing FTE resources to ensure no growth in government.

Additionally, the bill would authorize VA, during a three-year period, to place into medical foster homes that meet VA standards up to 900 veterans for whom VA is currently required to provide nursing home care.

The Message:

- The creation of a new administration will provide the needed oversight and prioritization of VA programs that help create economic opportunities for veterans.
- VA should be authorized to pay for the cost of MFHs, giving veterans who are otherwise eligible for nursing home care the choice of residing in a more family like setting, without having to pay out-of-pocket.