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COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Jeff Miller, Chairman, 335 Cannon House Office Building, Washington D.C. 20515

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Miller: “These Are Wounds That Cannot Wait”

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Today, Rep. Jeff Miller, Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, issued the following statement on VA’s announcement to hire additional mental health practitioners:

“Today, VA announced that they are hiring 1,900 new mental health care practitioners. We have seen high vacancy rates across the country—which in some areas are as high as 23 percent—and this is a start to ensure our veterans receive the care they need.

“There is much more, however, that VA needs to do to address gaps in services and ensure veterans undergoing treatment are not lost in the system.

“I expect VA to also increase training of employees who are the first touch points for veterans suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS) to provide effective intervention when it is needed most and properly identify the signs and behaviors of suicide risk. It is also imperative that wait times for those seeking care are decreased. These are wounds that cannot wait.

“Further, I expect VA to submit a revised budget detailing how funds for mental care are being reallocated and account funding that may have been diverted to other accounts and put back into mental health, where it rightfully belongs.

“There are a surge of veterans coming home, and VA must be prepared to meet their needs. If they are unable to do so, it is imperative that VA find community-based providers to match the right treatment for each veteran. Right now, too many veterans fall through the cracks. We can avert tragedy with the proper outreach and care. I am hopeful VA’s decision today, stemming from years of pressure and increased funding from Congress, will expand access for veterans and help them lead full and long lives.”

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