



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

H.R. 3642: Military Sexual Assault Victims Empowerment (SAVE) Act

Background:

Military Sexual Trauma (MST) is the term used by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to refer to experiences of sexual assault or harassment during military service. Like other forms of trauma, MST can have significant impacts on a veteran's health. VA data indicates that the diagnoses most frequently associated with MST among VA health care users are PTSD, depression, substance abuse disorders and other mood disorders.

While VA offers a variety of inpatient, outpatient and residential services to veterans who have experienced MST, there are persistent concerns by some that veterans who have experienced MST may not feel comfortable accessing care through VA and, therefore, will not receive the care they need if they have to go to VA medical facilities for it. Those advocates believe that expanding access to care in the community for veterans who have experienced MST will increase access to care and long-term health outcomes for these veterans.

H.R. 3642 would require VA to carry out a three-year pilot program at selected sites to furnish care at community facilities to veterans who have experienced military sexual trauma.

The Message:

- We have a duty to care for veterans suffering from the invisible wounds of war.
- Veterans who have experienced military sexual trauma may not feel comfortable accessing care at a VA facility.
- This bill would create a pilot program for military sexual trauma survivors to access care at community facilities.