



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON

VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Republicans | Ranking Member Phil Roe, M.D.

The Reducing Veteran Homelessness Act of 2020

Background:

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has prioritized ending veteran homelessness over the last decade. As a result, the number of veterans who are homeless has been cut in half since 2009 and 78 cities and three States have declared an end to veteran homelessness altogether. Yet, approximately 37,000 veterans are still experiencing homelessness, according to the most recent estimate from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). One of the primary programs VA and HUD use to connect homeless veterans with permanent housing is the HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program. However, as of July 2020, almost 20,000 HUD-VASH housing vouchers were not being used, partly because of a lack of case managers at VA medical facilities to help veterans navigate the program. The Grant and Per Diem (GPD) program is another important VA housing program, in which VA pays construction and per diem funding to GPD providers to support veterans in transitional housing. However, despite a growing number of requirements placed on them, it has been many years since GPD providers benefitted from a per diem increase to support the care they provide to veterans in need. The Reducing Veteran Homelessness Act of 2020 would make needed improvements to the VA HUD-VASH and GPD programs so that more homeless veterans can access housing through them. In particular, the bill would require VA medical facilities to enter into contracts with non-VA entities to provide case management services if 15% of the facility's HUD-VASH vouchers went unused in the previous year and the facility's case manager position has been vacant for more than 9 months. The bill would also increase the per diem payment to GPD providers and authorize the use of GPD funding to facilitate GPD provider access to VA's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) in order to improve coordination of care.

The Message:

- No one who has served our country in uniform should be left without a safe place to rest their head at night.
- With the growing impact of COVID-19 on the economy, there will be a continued, if not greater, need to improve access to housing and wraparound services to support veterans who are homeless or at-risk.
- The Reducing Veteran Homelessness Act of 2020 would make needed changes to VA housing programs to prevent homelessness among our nation's veterans and bring us one step closer to ending veteran homelessness once and for all.