

# HOUSE COMMITTEE ON **VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

REPUBLICANS | RANKING MEMBER MIKE BOST

## **The Guaranteeing Healthcare Access to Personnel Who Served (GHAPS) Act**

### **Background:**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare system provides care for approximately 7 million veteran patients each year. In 2014, Congress uncovered a nationwide access crisis in which veterans across the country were unable to receive VA care in a timely manner. That led to several years of successful, targeted efforts in government and the veteran community to improve the delivery of care to veterans and transform the VA healthcare system on their behalf. Those efforts include the enactment of the MISSION Act of 2018, which required VA to establish access standards for primary, specialty, and mental health care in VA medical facilities and through VA's community partners. They also include the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019, which expanded mental health care for at-risk veterans.

The Guaranteeing Healthcare Access to Personnel Who Served (GHAPS) Act would continue Congress' and the veteran community's ongoing work to make the VA health care system more accessible and accountable to those in need of its services. It would codify the current access standards to set a baseline expectation for the timeliness of the care provided to veteran patients and ensure that VA cannot restrict access without Congressional approval. It would improve the provision of care to veterans living in rural areas of the United States and in foreign countries. It would also make further improvements to VA's mental health care and research programs, create a pilot program to allow veterans to self-schedule appointments in the community, and help educate veterans about their VA health care benefits, among other things.

### **The Message:**

- VA should provide seamless support for the men and women who have served.
- The GHAPS Act would close gaps in care for veterans and improve VA's ability to care for them in VA facilities, in the community, at-home, and abroad.
- The GHAPS Act would help veterans in need get the support they have earned regardless of where they live or choose to seek care.