

# Speaker Ryan: Ryan and Gallagher send letter on veteran housing and recovery programs

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Contact: Congressman Ryan: [Ian Martorana](#)

Congressman Gallagher: [Madison Wiberg](#)

WASHINGTON – Today Wisconsin’s First District congressman and speaker of the House, Paul Ryan, sent a letter along with Eighth District Congressman Mike Gallagher, to the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, David S. Shulkin, regarding questions about VA grants under the Housing Provider Grant and Per Diem program.

“I am committed to working with stakeholders to ensure Wisconsin’s veterans continue to receive the care they need. This letter will help clarify outstanding issues surrounding these grants, and will help everyone involved chart a path forward to ensure these veterans receive the assistance they deserve,” said Congressman Ryan.

“Our veterans put themselves in harm’s way to defend our country, and ensuring that they receive the quality care they need and deserve is our moral obligation. I look forward to working with Secretaries Shulkin and Zimmerman to ensure we both modernize important initiatives like the Housing Provider Grant and Per Diem program and improve the lives of veterans across Wisconsin,” said Rep. Gallagher.

Text of the letter follows:

*Dear Secretary Shulkin:*

*On behalf of Wisconsin's veterans, we are writing to inquire about the future of the Veteran Housing and Recovery Programs (VHRP) through the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA). Currently, the WDVA operates three veterans' homes for homeless and at-risk veterans in Union Grove, King, and Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, serving approximately 79 veterans. Last week, the veterans housed at the Union Grove and King locations were notified that the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will not be renewing the grants for those programs, which will result in the closure of these facilities by the end of this calendar year. As you can appreciate, this unfortunate news has caused a significant amount of anxiety among the veteran residents who are currently housed in these facilities.*

*In 2016, the VA announced its intent to terminate grants awarded between Fiscal Years 1994 and 2016 to transform the Housing Provider Grant and Per Diem (GPD) program into a competitive, time-limited grant process. We support efforts to continually modernize VA programming to meet the changing needs of veterans and communities. And, while we agree that having measurable metrics and criteria to better determine success are critical for any grant program, and that supporting an emphasis on accountability and outcomes is important, given the critical need for the services these particular facilities provide to at-risk and homeless veterans, we are seeking additional information to better understand why the homes at Union Grove and King did not qualify for this federal funding for the first time since 1995 and 1997, respectively. In particular, your efforts to identify any specific attributes of these facilities' service delivery models or components of their applications that contributed to the VA's decision to terminate these grants would prove beneficial to these entities and the WDVA, should the WDVA pursue grant funds through this program in the future. If the VA believes there are ways that provider organizations can evolve to become better aligned with the GPD program as its transformation moves forward, organizations will benefit from information about how they might do so.*

*As published in the Federal Register in December 2016, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs states that, "VA now has at its disposal additional homeless programs that were not in existence previously and is working in conjunction with other Federal agencies to address homelessness among Veterans." We would respectfully request - in a manner consistent with all laws, rules, guidelines and regulations - that you give prompt attention to the concerns of the displaced veterans from these VHRPs in Wisconsin. We also ask that you make every effort to work with the WDVA and community partners to ensure that acceptable*

*arrangements can be secured as soon as possible to promptly assist the impacted veterans in receiving appropriate housing assistance through the other homeless programs referenced above. Additionally, your efforts to identify alternative funding resources that may be available to the WDVA to continue operations at these facilities is also appreciated. Lastly, it would be appreciated if you could provide regular updates to these veterans, their families, and to our congressional delegation as the VA moves forward with these efforts.*

*Please respond to the inquiries contained within this letter by close of business on Friday, July 28. We appreciate your attention to these concerns and remain committed to working together with the VA, State, and local officials to ensure that these veterans continue to receive the housing and care they vitally need.*

*We look forward to your timely response.*

*Sincerely,*

*Speaker Paul D. Ryan*

*Congressman Mike Gallagher*