

Vietnam Veterans of America: Calls on House to pass Forever GI bill and Veteran Urgent Access to Mental Healthcare Act

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Washington, D.C. - "Today, the House Committee on Veterans Affairs voted to improve and unanimously pass both the *Forever GI Bill* and the *Veteran Urgent Access to Mental Healthcare Act*. The House Veterans Affairs Committee has demonstrated that solid, bipartisan work is possible in Washington. Now it's up to the full House to vote on and pass these important bills before they go home in August," said John Rowan, President of Vietnam Veterans of America.

"We applaud Rep. Mike Coffman (R-C-6th) for taking the lead and working with Rep. Beto O'Rourke (D-TX-16th) and Rep. González-Colón (R-MP) to improve and expand the *The Veteran Urgent Access to Mental Healthcare Act*," said Rowan. This bill, when enacted, would require the Department of Veterans Affairs to improve its current policy on providing care for veterans with 'bad paper.' Currently, the VA waits until a veteran with bad paper reaches a point of crisis before allowing access to healthcare. This bill, as amended, will protect veterans' rights to access preventative mental healthcare so that the VA doesn't wait for veterans to become suicidal before providing help.

In partnership with over 40 military, veterans, and family organizations, VVA played the lead role in ensuring that the *Forever GI Bill* would become a lifetime benefit,

without an arbitrary 15-year expiration date. “VVA calls on Congress to put veterans first before they go on break,” said Rowan. “*The Forever GI Bill* and *The Veteran Urgent Access to Mental Healthcare Act* are worth a vote.”