



May 15, 2024

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Johnson and Minority Leader Jeffries:

As the country prepares to honor those women and men who gave their lives in service of our country this Memorial Day, we want to remind you of the tens of thousands of veterans who currently or soon will require long term care in this country and deserve additional options to meet their needs.

On behalf of the undersigned veterans' groups, advocates for older adults, including those suffering from Alzheimer's and related dementia, and the leading senior living industry organizations, we seek your support for H.R. 8371, *the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act*. This legislation includes several bipartisan and bicameral proposals to reform and improve the delivery of healthcare, benefits, and services at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for veterans, their families, and their survivors. Included in this bill under Subtitle B, Section 127, is the key provisions of the *"Expanding Veterans' Options for Long Term Care Act"*, which will create a pilot program to allow veterans access to assisted living for their long-term care needs. We are grateful to the sponsors of this proposal and urge you to prioritize action by ensuring this important legislation is acted on as Congress considers a Memorial Day veterans' package.

The Veterans Administration (VA) has acknowledged the challenges relative to the aging veteran population and the need and value of rebalancing its long-term care programs. This legislation gives the department the authority to do that by offering additional options.

The proposal is an economically sound and sensible approach to demonstrate the benefits of this setting to not only the resident veteran, but to their families, friends, and fellow veterans. It authorizes the VA to offer assisted living settings for aging and disabled veterans who would otherwise require more expensive nursing home care, thus giving the veteran more options for how and where they can get the long-term care they need. It provides the VA critical flexibility to address the needs of a rapidly growing population of aging or disabled veterans who are not able to live at home and future costs savings will help more veterans receive the assistance they need.

## **Broad Support for an Assisted Living Pilot Program for Veterans**

As you can see from the many signatories to this letter, there is much support for this legislation from those who serve our country, those who serve our aging Americans including those suffering from Alzheimer's and other dementia, and those who are seeking solutions to the growing need for care in an aging population.

We thank you for your work in taking bold action to improve the lives of our nation's veterans at a time when they need it the most. We strongly encourage your leadership in moving this important legislation forward as we celebrate our veterans this Memorial Day and every day.

Sincerely,

Alzheimer's Association  
Alzheimer's Impact Movement  
American Seniors Housing Association  
Argentum  
LeadingAge  
National Association of State Veterans Homes  
National Center for Assisted Living  
National Rural Health Association  
Paralyzed Veterans of America

CC: Sen. Jon Tester, Chair, Senate Veterans Affairs Committee  
Sen. Jerry Moran, Ranking Member, Senate Veterans Affairs Committee  
Rep. Mike Bost, Chair, House Veterans Affairs Committee  
Rep. Mark Takano, Ranking Member, House Veterans Affairs Committee