



November 22, 2024

The Honorable Jon Tester
Chairman, Veterans' Affairs Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Ranking Member, Veterans' Affairs Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Letter of Support for *H.R. 8371, The Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act*

Dear Senator Tester and Senator Moran:

As advocates for older adults, including those suffering from Alzheimer's and related dementia, and the leading senior living industry organizations, we write to express our strong support for H.R. 8371, *The Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act*. We have made this legislation a priority for the lame duck session of Congress and urge you to seek a Unanimous Consent (UC) agreement on H.R. 8371 to expedite passage of this important legislation. The House of Representatives passed this legislation earlier this week under suspension of the rules, exceeding the 2/3rds requirement to pass the chamber with a vote of 389-9, underscoring the broad support for this package. The Senate must act to get this important bill over the finish line to deliver much needed options for long-term care to our veterans.

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). In addition to the undersigned groups, there is broad support for this legislation including 50 organizations representing veteran service organizations (VSOs), major homelessness prevention organizations, education training providers, health and aging services organizations, as well as private companies, which underscores the urgency for immediate action.

Specific to the interests of this coalition is Subtitle B, Section 127, which reflects key provisions of *S. 495, the Expanding Veterans' Options for Long Term Care Act*. This section authorizes the VA to offer assisted living settings for aging and disabled veterans who would otherwise require more costly nursing home care. This pilot program will give veterans additional options for how and where they can get the long-term care they need as well as inform future policy decisions to meet the growing care needs of our nation's aging veterans.

The VA has acknowledged the challenges relative to the aging veteran population and the need and value of rebalancing its long-term care programs. The proposal is an economically sound and sensible approach to demonstrate the benefits of assisted living settings to the resident veteran, their families, friends, and fellow veterans. 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.

Please seek a UC agreement to move H.R. 8371 in this Lame Duck session. Thank you for your work to improve the lives of our veterans.

Sincerely,

Alzheimer's Association
Alzheimer's Impact Movement
American Seniors Housing Association
Argentum
LeadingAge
National Center for Assisted Living