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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4702

July 10, 2014

Senator Bernie Sanders
Chairman, Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
Russell Senate Building- Room 412

Senator Richard Burr
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
Russell Senate Building- Room 412

Congressman Jeff Miller
Chairman, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
335 Cannon House Office Building

Congressman Mike Michaud
Ranking Member, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
333 Cannon House Office Building

Dear Chairman Sanders, Ranking Member Burr, Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Michaud,

Thank you for your tireless efforts on behalf of our nation's veterans. In light of recent revelations about improper practices at the Department of Veterans Affairs, your continued attention will be vital to ensuring our veterans receive the care they have earned. As you begin to conference the recently passed House and Senate VA reform bills, there are several important issues I encourage you to include in the final legislation.

As the war in Afghanistan draws to a close and our servicemembers come home, we need to prepare to give these women and men care that fits the injuries they have sustained. Many of these veterans return with service-related genitourinary disabilities that make conception difficult or impossible. That is why I introduced H.R. 958, the Women Veterans and Other Health Care Improvements Act of 2013. This bipartisan bill would clarify that fertility counseling and treatment are available to veterans and provide these services to the spouse or surrogate of an injured veteran. I believe these important changes would complement the vital reforms to the Veterans Health Administration you are deliberating and should be included in the conference bill.

We have long provided financial support to servicemembers who wish to pursue higher education, and these programs have been extremely successful. One obstacle that remains, however, is that colleges and universities may not know what benefits each veteran is entitled to. When academic counselors do not have a full picture of a veteran's benefits, they cannot give the best advice about how to coordinate financial aid resources, complete degrees within required timeframes, or give the full array of options to

meet a veteran's educational goals. I introduced H.R. 2749, the Veterans Education Transparency Act to address this problem. This bill, which enjoys bipartisan support, would give veterans the option of having their records maintained by the VA, which would then be available online for colleges and universities. It does not require anyone to participate in this program, and includes important privacy protections. I believe providing this option to our veterans would reduce the administrative burden they face when pursuing higher education and I request that it be included in the conference bill.

Veterans in Northwest Washington benefit greatly from the Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) in Mount Vernon and North Seattle. Several have expressed their desire to see mental health services and urgent care provided at their local CBOCs. I believe the final bill should both increase the number of CBOCs and expand the services these clinics provide.

Thank you for your continued efforts to ensure we honor our commitments to those who have sacrificed the most. As you conference S. 2450 and HR 4810, I urge you to look at ways to improve the entire scope of veterans' services. By including fertility treatments, educational transparency, and expanded services at CBOCs in the final legislation, you can make an even greater contribution to the lives of veterans.

Sincerely,



Rick Larsen

Member of Congress