

President Signs Critical Veterans Legislation into Law

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The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) was on hand today at Fort Belvoir, VA as the president signed H.R. 3230, the *Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014* into law. The newly signed law will provide the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) with an additional \$15 billion of emergency funding to ensure veterans who cannot be seen by a VA doctor will not be forced to wait months for care. It will also allow VA to begin building capacity and regain veterans' trust by hiring more physicians and building needed infrastructure and allowing the Secretary to fire top executives who don't have veterans' best interest at heart.

"As early as 2002 the VFW has testified before Congress that veterans are waiting too long for care and that VA doesn't have the doctors and space needed to provide timely care," said VFW Commander-in-Chief John Stroud. "This legislation is a positive first step in putting VA back on track, but it will take decisive leadership within VA, as well as strong oversight from Congress and the veteran community to ensure our veterans receive the timely, quality care they have earned."

The VFW membership then passed a stern resolution at the recent VFW National Convention, telling Congress to either pass the bill before recess, or pay the consequences back home. This message was quickly reinforced by the VFW's grassroots Action Corps, which sent nearly 32,000 messages to every Congressional office on Capitol Hill, insisting legislators take action.

"VFW members were rightfully outraged over the recent controversy, and today the voices of our members resonated strongly in Washington," said Stroud.

The *Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014* also includes critical provisions expanding traumatic brain injury care programs for veterans; improving education benefits for surviving spouses; critical funding for 27 new or expanded VA Community-based Outpatient Clinics; and a provision offering veterans in-state tuition at the public college or university of their choice within three years of leaving active duty.

The new law comes in the wake of a nationwide scandal in which veterans and whistleblowers called attention to veterans languishing on appointment waiting lists at VA facilities. The scandal has led to widespread criminal investigations and the resignation of many top VA officials. When news of the scandal broke, the VFW mobilized its health care help line, 1-800-VFW-1899, encouraging veterans to call and share their experiences, and intervening directly with VA on behalf of more than 200 veterans who were waiting for

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