



March 21, 2017

The Honorable Matt Cartwright
United States House of Representatives
1034 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

On behalf of the Association of the United States Navy, we would like to pledge our support for H.R. 902, the Expedited Hiring for VA Trained Psychiatrists Act of 2017. This legislation aims to reduce the wait times for veterans seeking mental health care by allowing the VA to establish a fast-track process for hiring psychiatrists.

Currently, the VA lacks the resources to support the growing number of veterans seeking help. According to the VA, almost a third of veterans within its health care system suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In 2014, the VA reported that an average of 20 veterans died from suicide each day. This bill creates a more efficient hiring process for psychiatrists so veterans are able to seek the care they need.

This bill authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs to appoint a psychiatrist who completes a residency at a Veterans Health Administration facility to a VHA health care position immediately after such residency, without regard to civil service or classification laws, if the psychiatrist meets the qualifications established in regulations prescribed for the position, and if the position has been unfilled for at least thirty-five days.

Thank you for taking an active role in such an important issue to the Military and Veteran community by working to improve the lives and careers of those who served our great nation. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns at 703-548-5800 or at michael.little@ausn.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Joseph Little". To the right of the signature, there is a handwritten note in blue ink that says "ABSH²(AW/Sea) USNR".

Michael J. Little
Director of Legislative Affairs