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House of Representatives

HEALTH CARE REFORM WILL NOT CHANGE VETERANS' CARE!

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill and I would like to take the opportunity to remind America's veterans that the plan will not affect the VA health care system. I continue to work in concert with leaders in the House of Representatives to ensure that veterans receive the world-class health care services they have so bravely earned.

Let me be clear: enrolled veterans meet the individual responsibility requirements under the bill to maintain quality health coverage.

I firmly believe all of our citizens should have access to health care. I am proud that Congress has crafted a plan to bring stability and security to Americans who have insurance today, and affordable coverage to those who do not. This plan, however, will not jeopardize the current health care services and benefits provided by VA. We will keep our promise to our Nation's heroes of the past, present, and future.

I was pleased to sign a letter with House Armed Services Chairman IKE SHELTON, House Ways & Means Chairman SANDER LEVIN, House Education & Labor Chairman GEORGE MILLER, and House Energy and Commerce Chairman HENRY WAXMAN affirming that current health care reform legislation does not undermine or change the Department of Veterans Affairs mandate to provide comprehensive health care to veterans. I would like to submit this letter, along with statements from the Vietnam Veterans of America and AMVETS and a statement from General Eric Shinseki, Secretary of the VA, affirming this fact for the RECORD.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,

Washington, DC, March 21, 2010.

Hon. LOUISE SLAUGHTER,
*Committee on Rules, The Capitol,
Washington, DC.*

DEAR CHAIRWOMAN SLAUGHTER: The House Democratic leadership asked our committees to review HR 3590 and HR 4872 to assess the impact of the bills on the health care provided by the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs. Our reviews of HR 3590 and HR 4872 lead us to believe that the intent of the bills was never to undermine or change the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs operation of their health care programs or interfere with the care that our service members receive under TRICARE. However, we commit to look into this issue further to ensure that no unintended consequences may arise and to take any legislative action that may be necessary.

HR 3590, as drafted, does not specifically mention that TRICARE coverage meets the individual responsibility requirement. but such coverage would satisfy the requirements of this bill. To affirm that this is the case, the U.S. House of Representatives unanimously passed HR 4887, the TRICARE Affirmation Act, which provides assurances to the American people that care provided to those in the military and their families, as well as military retirees under age 65 and their families, would indeed meet the requirement for coverage.

The members of our nation's military sacrifice much to defend us all. We commit to these dedicated service members and their families as well as our veterans that we will protect the quality healthcare they receive,

Sincerely,

Bob Filner,
Chairman, Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

George Miller,
Chairman, Committee on Education and Labor.

Henry Waxman,
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce.

Ike Skelton,
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services.

Sander Levin,
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means.