



NATIONAL COALITION *for* HOMELESS VETERANS

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Hill Watch: Congress Passes Veterans Bill with Homelessness Provisions

Bill heads to the President's desk for signature

Very early Saturday morning the U.S. Senate passed, by unanimous consent, H.R. 6416, the “Jeff Miller and Richard Blumenthal Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2016”. This bill contained several provisions related to veteran homelessness, some of the highlights of which included:

- Permanently authorizing the use of VA homeless programs by veterans with “Other Than Honorable” discharges,
- An update to the VA’s definition of homelessness, to include the McKinney-Vento updates which allow individuals fleeing domestic violence to be considered homeless,
- An authorization of a higher Per Diem rate to be paid to Transition in Place programs,
- The creation a program to allow for follow-up case management for veterans who have successfully completed a GPD program,
- Provisions designed to ease the transition for any GPD that wishes shift units to permanent housing provider, and
- Permanently authorizing the National Center for Homelessness Among Veterans.

“This bill represents the most significant piece of legislation for homeless veterans in more than two years,” said Baylee Crone, Executive Director of the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans.

“Permanently protecting access to homeless programs for all veterans without a dishonorable discharge has been an issue since 1996. NCHV is proud to have finally put the question to rest.”

NCHV is happy to announce that this bill is on its way to the President’s desk for his signature. Its finalization into law is expected, as there have been no signals from the White House that they intend to veto the bill.

Thank you to everyone who responded to our calls for advocacy – both here and on our social media accounts. Your contributions to the effort made the difference; it kept this issue at the top of the agenda, even in the contentious environment confronting the Congress over the past several days.

NCHV would also like to thank our national partner organizations who join us as members of the Homeless Veteran Working Group, and who signed on as supporters of the legislation. These partners include: National Alliance to End Homelessness, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Volunteers of America, National League of Cities, Community Solutions, Vietnam Veterans of America, and the Congressional Black Caucus Veterans Braintrust. Their efforts over the 114th Congress made huge impacts on the adoption and passage of this major legislation, and they too deserve accolades and our thanks.