

# HOUSE COMMITTEE ON **VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

REPUBLICANS | RANKING MEMBER MIKE BOST

## **H.R. 292: VA Health Center Management and Stability Act**

### **Background:**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare system is charged with providing timely, high-quality health care and supportive services to approximately 9 million veteran patients. Accordingly, VA operates approximately 172 VA medical centers – or, hospitals – across the country. Having stable, high-quality medical center directors leading those facilities is critical to ensuring that veteran patients receive the care they have earned and deserve. However, VA has struggled to maintain a consistent cadre of medical center directors. For example, following the 2014 nationwide VA access and accountability crisis, approximately 91 percent of VA medical facilities put new leaders or leadership teams in place. Some facilities have continued to struggle since then to maintain permanent leadership. This can significantly hinder a VA medical center's ability to engage in long-term planning, cultural and systemic reform, and other work necessarily to improving the care that veterans receive there.

The VA Health Center Management and Stability Act would require VA to develop and implement a plan to hire directors at VA medical centers that lack permanent leadership and to prioritize hiring at those facilities that have lacked such leadership the longest. As part of that plan, VA would be required to identify any impediments to hiring medical center directors that exist as well as opportunities to train and promote internal candidates to leadership positions. VA would also be required to share the hiring plan with Congress and to report to Congress semiannually after the plan is in place.

### **The Message:**

- It is critical that the veterans who seek care in VA medical centers are met by stable, best-in-class leaders, which is why the VA Health Center Management and Stability Act would require VA to put a plan in place to hire directors at each VA Medical Center.
- Too many VA medical centers lack stable, permanent medical center directors, which hinders their ability to meet the needs of veteran patients and oversee the work of VA staff.