

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON **VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

REPUBLICANS | RANKING MEMBER MIKE BOST

H.R.2545: To clarify the role of doctors of podiatric medicine in the Department of Veterans Affairs

Background:

Podiatrists offer essential medical care and services for patients with problems affecting their lower extremities. They can also treat injuries and complications from ongoing health issues, such as diabetes. Hundreds of podiatrists honorably serve our nation's veterans through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare system. In 2018, Congress clarified that they are equal to physicians and dentists with respect to compensation and leadership opportunities in VA through the MISSION Act (Public Law 115-182). In 2020, Congress corrected an error in law that impeded certain VA employees serving in Senior Executive Service-equivalent positions from receiving their full salaries through Public Law 116-146. However, the VA Director of Podiatric Service was inadvertently left out of that legislation.

H.R. 2545 would correct that technical error by replacing the VA "Director of Podiatric Service" position with a VA "Podiatric Medical Director" position in statute. This would ensure that the head of the podiatry service in the VA healthcare system is eligible for appropriate salary increases and is on equal footing with their peers. It would also ensure that VA can continue to be competitive in recruiting and retaining the highest quality podiatrists to care for the nation's veterans. This bill is consistent with the intent of Congress in providing equity for all doctors, including podiatrists, within VA.

The Message:

- Podiatrists provide critical care to a growing number of veterans at VA.
- Due to a technical error in law, VA runs the risk of losing good doctors who offer first-class podiatry care to veterans.
- This commonsense legislation will ensure that podiatrists are on fully equal footing with their peers in the VA healthcare system.