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*Chartered by the Congress of the United States*

March 5, 2021

The Honorable Mark Takano  
Chairman  
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mike Bost  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Takano and Ranking Member Bost,

On behalf of the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), I want to thank you for introducing H.R. 1276, the VA VACCINE Act. This legislation would allow the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide the COVID-19 vaccine to veterans' caregivers.

Veterans with spinal cord injuries and disorders (SCI/D) are at the highest risk of an adverse outcome from the coronavirus due to their complex conditions. Recently, VA announced that SCI/D veterans, regardless of age, will now have priority access to the COVID vaccine. While PVA members are grateful for VA's decision, they remain anxious for their caregivers to be eligible to receive the vaccine.

In a January survey of PVA members, 81 percent reported that their primary caregiver had not yet been vaccinated. Although VA has authorized providing the vaccine to participants of the Department's comprehensive caregiver program, only 15 percent of surveyed members reported being enrolled in the program. The VA VACCINE Act would make more caregivers for our most vulnerable veterans eligible to receive the vaccine through VA, including those who are in the general caregiver program and those who provide care through the Bowel and Bladder program.

We strongly support this legislation because it would be a great benefit to PVA members and other veterans living with catastrophic disabilities. We look forward to working with you to ensure its swift passage.

Sincerely,

Heather L. Ansley, Esq., MSW  
Associate Executive Director of Government Relations