

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 23, 2016

Senator Johnny Isakson  
Chairman  
Senate Veterans Affairs Committee

Senator Richard Blumenthal  
Ranking Member  
Senate Veterans Affairs Committee

Chairman Isakson and Ranking Member Blumenthal:

We urge you to act to authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) major medical facility leases currently pending before Congress, and for which funding has been included in the Senate Committee-passed fiscal year 2017 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. These lease authorizations are needed to enable the VA to deliver care and services to veterans across the United States. Together, the 18 VA facilities with authorizations pending before Congress deliver care to our veterans.

Authorization of these leases has been hampered by a scorekeeping issue. Under current law, the VA must receive specific legislative authorization to lease medical facilities with average annual rental payments in excess of \$1 million. In 2012, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) began scoring the total obligations for the life of a VA major medical lease at the time of authorization, rather than annually. As such, legislation authorizing VA major medical leases receives much larger direct spending scores even though actual spending would not increase and the leases are subject to appropriations.

This scoring change has stymied efforts to authorize any VA major medical facility leases. Currently, 18 leases in 12 states from fiscal years 2015 and 2016 have been pending authorization in Congress for more than one year:

1. Ann Arbor, MI - Outpatient Clinic
2. Birmingham, AL - Outpatient Mental Health Clinic
3. Birmingham, AL - Outpatient Specialty Clinic
4. Boston, MA - Research
5. Charleston, SC - Research
6. Daytona Beach, FL - Outpatient Clinic
7. Denver, CO - Chief Business Office Purchased Care
8. Gainesville, FL - Outpatient Clinic
9. Hampton Roads, VA - Outpatient Clinic
10. Mission Bay, CA - Research
11. Missoula, MT - Outpatient Clinic
12. Northern Colorado, CO - Outpatient Clinic
13. Ocala, FL - Outpatient Clinic
14. Oxnard, CA - Outpatient Clinic
15. Pike County, GA - Outpatient Clinic
16. Portland, ME - Outpatient Clinic
17. Raleigh, NC - Outpatient Clinic
18. Santa Rosa, CA - Outpatient Clinic

Additionally, there are major medical facility leases in New York, Texas, and Indiana that require authorization. As such, we ask that you act swiftly to authorize these pending leases until a more permanent solution to the issue can be found. Inaction on this issue hampers the ability of veterans in our states to access timely and quality care from the VA. We thank you for your continued dedication to our nation's veterans and their families, and look forward to working with you on this critical issue.

Sincerely,




MARK R. WARNER  
United States Senate



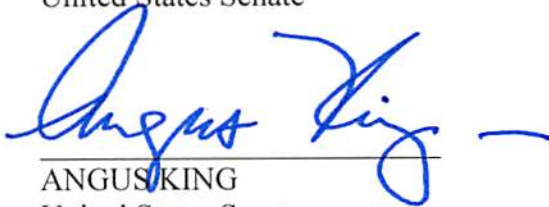
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United States Senate



MICHAEL F. BENNET  
United States Senate



JON TESTER  
United States Senate



ANGUS KING  
United States Senate



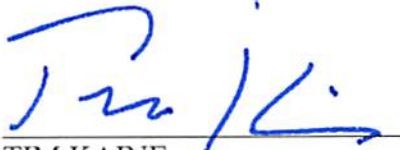
CHARLES SCHUMER  
United States Senate



EDWARD J. MARKEY  
United States Senate



KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND  
United States Senate



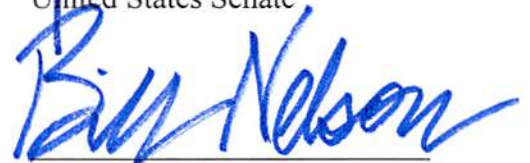
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