

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 18, 2019

The Honorable John Boozman
Chairman
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Brian Schatz
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Boozman and Ranking Member Schatz:

In recent years, the Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies has worked to revive the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) State Home Construction Grant Program, which has been mired in backlogs. We are very pleased that the full Committee approved a Fiscal Year 2019 bill that provided \$150 million for this important program, and we sincerely thank you for your leadership in securing this funding. We write again to ask that you build on this recent progress by providing robust funding in Fiscal Year 2020 to reflect the crucial role the State Home Construction Grant Program plays in providing care for our veterans.


As you know, State Veterans Homes have a long history of helping ensure that veterans disabled by age, illness, or other conditions receive the respect and dignity they have earned through their service. Operated by state governments and totaling more than 150 facilities across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, these facilities are critical in the effort to address the unique health and quality of life challenges of each state's veteran population. The VA partners with certified state homes to provide nursing home, domiciliary, and adult day care services to critical segments of the veteran population with continuing or special medical needs, including thousands of elderly veterans.

Federal funds made available through the VA State Home Construction Grant Program allows states to make critical upgrades to existing facilities and construct new modern facilities to serve the aging veteran population. These grant opportunities are important to ensure that each State Veterans Home facility continues to meet VA's standards and delivers the highest caliber of care. We know it is our veterans who suffer the consequences when the program is not adequately funded. Without proper federal resources, states face a number of challenges to meeting the long-term care needs of our veterans, particularly in rural states or states lacking alternate VA-certified facilities.

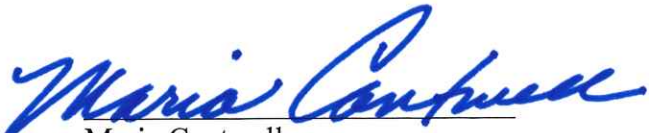
Given the high demand for renovation and new construction projects across the country, it is critical that Congress continues to provide strong support for this program. We cannot afford to revert to when the program was under-resourced and facing severe budget shortfalls. A robust appropriation would improve our ability to provide high-quality care for our nation's veterans. As the Subcommittee considers appropriations for 2020, we ask that the Subcommittee fully fund the VA State Home Construction Grant Program.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and for your continued support in ensuring our nation's veterans live with dignity.

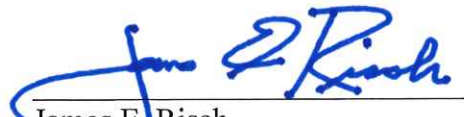
Sincerely,


Gary C. Peters
United States Senator


Mike Crapo
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



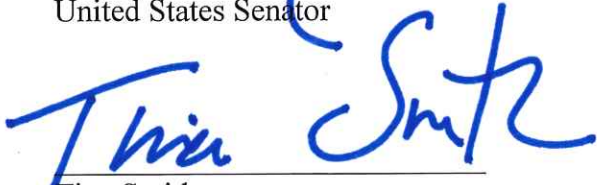
James E. Risch
United States Senator



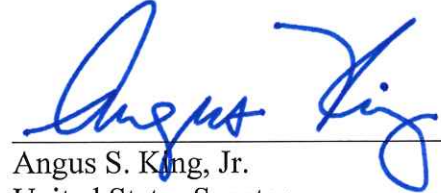
Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



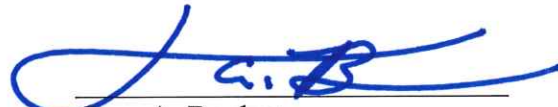
Tina Smith
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



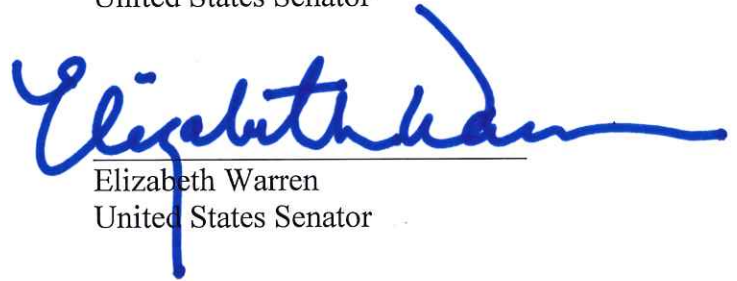
Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



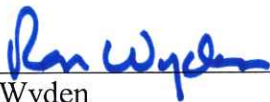
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



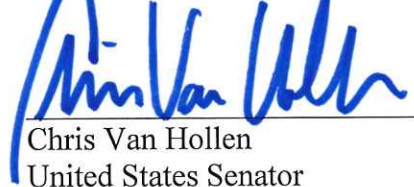
Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



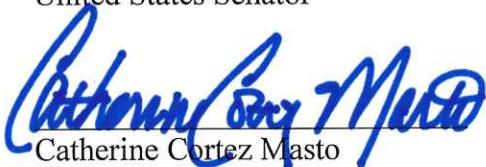
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



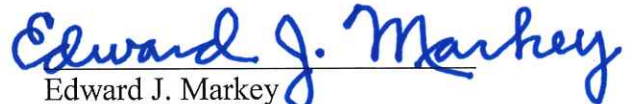
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator