

DAV Pleased Senate Passes Compromise VA Bill

DAV National Commander Joseph W. Johnston Statement on Senate Passage of the “Veterans’ Access to Care through Choice, Accountability, and Transparency Act of 2014”

“DAV praises Chairman Bernie Sanders (VT) and Senator John McCain (AZ) for putting partisan politics aside to quickly pass bipartisan legislation in response to the current VA health care crisis. With last night’s near unanimous Senate vote, following House passage of similar legislation sponsored by Chairman Jeff Miller (FL), Ranking Member Mike Michaud (ME) and others, the Senate and House are in a position to rapidly reach agreement on compromise legislation that could lead to better access to medical care for the men and women who served. As Congress proceeds with these negotiations, it is important that they coordinate and consult with Acting VA Secretary Sloan Gibson, who has already implemented a series of emergency actions aimed at providing immediate access to health care for thousands of veterans waiting to receive such care.

“DAV will continue working with the Senate, House and VA to help fine tune, strengthen and coalesce around effective administrative, regulatory and legislative changes needed to address VA’s capacity and access problems. As the House and Senate go to conference to iron out their differences, it is imperative that the final compromise bill retain the strong care coordination provisions contained in the Senate bill in order to ensure the best health outcomes for all veterans receiving care paid for by VA, regardless of the provider of that care. Equally important, as Congress expands VA’s mandate to provide care through non-VA providers, Congress must ensure

that it appropriates all the additional funding needed without taking away funding from VA's hospitals and clinics that are already at or over capacity."