

JOHN B. LARSON

FIRST DISTRICT, CONNECTICUT

WASHINGTON OFFICE:

1005 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515
202-225-2265
202-225-1031 (FAX)

DISTRICT OFFICE:

221 MAIN STREET, SECOND FLOOR
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106
860-278-8888
860-278-2111 (FAX)

INTERNET ADDRESS:

<http://www.house.gov/larson>

TOLL-FREE NUMBER (IN STATE ONLY):
888-716-4734



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0701

June 11, 2003

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SPACE AND AERONAUTICS

COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION
RANKING MEMBER

DEMOCRATIC STEERING COMMITTEE

FORMER STATE LEGISLATIVE LEADERS
WORKING GROUP
CO-CHAIR

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear President Bush:

I am writing today to bring to your attention H.R. 890, the 21st Century Veterans Equitable Treatment Act (VET-21). I have introduced this bill to ensure adequate health care access by setting standards for appointments using the VA's established performance goals. If the VA is incapable of meeting these standards, this legislation would allow service or treatment at a non-VA medical facility for which a veteran would have otherwise qualified within the VA system.

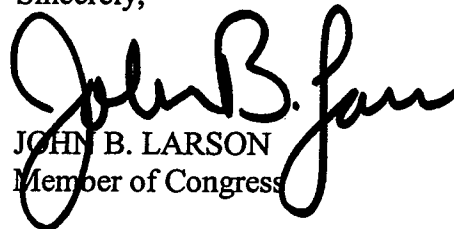
May I commend you for your actions in creating the President's Task Force to Improve Health Care Delivery for Our Nation's Veterans. As you know, the recently released final report by the Task Force included a number of recommendations. My legislation specifically addresses Recommendation 5.2:

VA facilities should be held accountable to meet the VA's access standards for enrolled Priority Groups 1 through 7 (new). In instances where an appointment cannot be offered within the access standard, VA should be required to arrange for care with a non-VA provider, unless the veteran elects to wait for an available appointment within VA.

As you consider a number of critical veterans issues, I wanted to make you aware of this inequity in the VA health care system and the legislation I first introduced in the 107th Congress to address it. For your review, I have enclosed a copy of the bill, a summary, and letters of support from a number of veterans organizations.

Again, thank you for taking the initiative to create this Task Force and looking into the issues that are important to our veterans. I look forward to working with you and my colleagues in Congress to address this crucial issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John B. Larson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being the most prominent part.

JOHN B. LARSON
Member of Congress