

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

July 29, 2015

The Honorable John Boehner  
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives  
H-204, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Leader Pelosi,

I write today to encourage you to bring to the floor two important bills that will immediately benefit veterans throughout the nation. Given all the recent problems at the Department of Veterans Affairs, from the \$2.5 billion budget shortfall to the allegations of over prescription of opiates and retaliatory behavior at the Tomah Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC), it is irresponsible for Congress to adjourn for the August recess without fully addressing these critical issues. I have introduced two bipartisan bills that would go a long way toward providing better care for our veterans, and I encourage consideration of both bills.

The Veterans Pain Management Improvement Act, H.R. 1628, will give veteran patients and their families an important role in VA oversight of patient care. Specifically, the bill would establish a pain management board within each Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) comprised of health care professionals and clinical patients and/or family members of a clinical patient. The pain management board would serve as a resource for the region's facilities, patients, and family members, provide best practices recommendations for pain management to the VA facilities within its region, including patient, family member and medical perspectives, and report on pain management practices to the Secretary of the VA and Congress. The bill is based on a recommendation from a VA Office of Inspector General (OIG) report looking into prescription practices at the Tomah VAMC. Dr. Carolyn Clancy, VA Interim Under Secretary for Health, has expressed her support for the bill, and the Disabled Americans Veterans (DAV) have endorsed the legislation.

The Inspectors General Transparency Act of 2015, H.R. 1938, would provide better oversight and accountability at the VA OIG. The Inspectors General Transparency Act of 2015 would require OIG work products to be published on the OIG website and delivered to the appropriate establishment heads and congressional representatives within three days of completion. The bill would allow organizations to better act on the recommendations of the Inspectors General and to ensure that these recommendations are properly shared with necessary entities. H.R. 1938 is unanimously supported by the Wisconsin House of Representatives delegation.

Both of these bills have bipartisan support and would be important steps toward improving care for our veterans. Especially with all of the problems at the VA, I urge consideration of these two bills before Members of Congress leave for August recess. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ron Kind". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ron Kind  
Member of Congress

Cc: The Honorable Jason Chaffetz  
Chairman, Oversight and Government Reform Committee

The Honorable Elijah Cummings  
Ranking Member, Oversight and Government Reform Committee

The Honorable Jeff Miller  
Chairman, Committee on Veterans' Affairs

The Honorable Corrine Brown  
Ranking Member, Committee on Veterans' Affairs