



OFFICE OF THE
NATIONAL COMMANDER

January 24, 2018

The Honorable Thomas Rooney
United States House of Representatives
2160 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Rooney:

On behalf of the 2 million members of The American Legion, we are pleased to express support for H.R. 506 entitled the *"Preventing Crimes Against Veterans Act of 2017."*

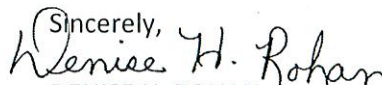
The *Preventing Crimes Against Veterans Act of 2017*, as currently written, amends the federal criminal code to declare that any person who knowingly engages in any scheme or artifice to defraud an individual of veterans' benefits, or in connection with obtaining veteran's benefits for that individual, shall be fined, imprisoned, or both.

Veterans facing delayed services and Veterans Affairs' backlogs have been targeted by unscrupulous actors seeking to take advantage of their vulnerable positions. The American Legion has long recognized that seniors filing for veterans' benefits on their own can find it challenging with Veterans Affairs' backlogs to process claims. In light of this, The American Legion provides VA-accredited advisers who help Veterans pursue claims for free. Some, even available in VA clinics and hospitals.

This act recognizes that current laws are not sufficient in deterring criminals from illegally targeting our nation's veterans. The intent of this bill is to close an existing loophole in the federal law and give authorities an additional tool to use against criminals who are committing fraud in connection with veterans' benefits.

According to Resolution No. 57 *"Prevent Exploitation of Veterans and Family Members Applying for Benefits, to Include Aid and Attendance,"* passed at the 2016 National Convention, The American Legion is on record urging the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Congress to tighten current laws that prohibit the practice of charging veterans or their families for claims assistance.

The American Legion applauds your leadership in recognizing that current laws are insufficient in deterring criminals from illegally targeting our nation's veterans.

Sincerely,

DENISE H. ROHAN
National Commander